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THE JOURNAL OF MRS. FENTON

1826—1830

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A NARRATIVE OF HER LIFE IN
INDIA,* THE ISLE OF FRANCE
•(MAURITIUS), AND TASMANIA
DURING THE YEARS

1826-1830

With a Preface by

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PREFACE

MRS. FENTON'S *Journal* deals with no stirring events, nor—except for one fleeting glimpse of Sir Henry Havelock, then an obscure subaltern—with any great historic figure. It is now given to the world in the belief that it is a not unsuccessful attempt to satisfy her friend's demand for 'a familiar picture of the everyday occurrences, manners and habits of life of persons undistinguished either by wealth or fame,' and that such a picture, after the lapse of more than seventy years, itself becomes in some sort historical, while the rapid changes and vicissitudes of the writer's own career add a more intimately human and individual element of interest.

It has been found desirable to abridge the *Journal* considerably, and incidentally to mend the grammar of a few hastily written sentences, but changes in this respect have intentionally been made as sparingly as possible. Mrs. Fenton's spelling has been modernised, though one parts regretfully with such words as 'tygres' and 'atalevents'; that of Indian words has, as a rule, been preserved. Most of the quotations have obviously been written rapidly and from memory. They are left as written. In order to complete Mrs. Fenton's portrait, one or two specimens have been retained out of a considerable number of verses. 'It was atalevents a very harmless amusement,' she characteristically

observes, 'though not a very profitable one—at least so I have tried to convince myself when half ashamed of the propensity.'

In other respects the Journal tells its own story so fully as to call for no explanations or comments, but the following particulars as to the family of the writer may be of interest.

Mrs. Fenton was the daughter of the Rev. John Russel Knox, Rector of Lifford, and afterwards of Innismagrath, Co. Leitrim. The family of Knox had long been settled on the North of Ireland, and were descended from Alexander Knox, Bishop of Raphoe from 1610 to 1633, who was a man of considerable mark in his time. A later ancestor was Provost Marshal of the garrison in the great siege of Derry in 1689.

Her aunt, Letitia Knox, sister of the Rev. John Russel Knox, became the wife of Lieutenant Alexander Lawrence, and the 'cousin George Lawrence' of the Journal¹ was their son, and the elder brother of Henry² and John Lawrence.³

Readers of Sir Herbert Edwardes's life of Sir Henry Lawrence will be familiar with the names of Letitia's sister 'Aunt Angel,' and of her brother the Rev. James Knox, Master of Foyle College, where the three Lawrence brothers were educated.

The Journal ceases abruptly, and was never resumed in the same form; but the 'book' remained in Mrs. Fenton's

¹ Lieutenant General Sir George St. Patrick Lawrence, K.C.S.I., C.B., Author of *Reminiscences of Forty-three Years in India*.

² Brigadier-General Sir Henry Montgomery Lawrence, K.C.B., who fell in the defence of Lucknow in the great Indian Mutiny.

³ John Laird Mair, first Lord Lawrence, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., Viceroy of India.

possession, and contains a short entry describing the burning of the house at Fenton Forest in 1848: it is addressed to 'you, my beloved children,' and is marked by the same blending of 'Sense and Sensibility' as the rest of the Journal. Mrs. Fenton kept a later journal in another book till within a few years of her death, but it is not in possession of her daughter, Mrs. M'Culloch, to whom the present Journal belongs, and seems to have disappeared. Her plans for a family reunion were only partially fulfilled: the Gibsons came to Van Diemen's Land in 1832, but James Knox was lost at sea with his wife and child when on his way thither from India on sick leave. Mrs. Gibson subsequently returned to England, and died quite recently in her 100th year. Mrs. Fenton lived on at Fenton Forest till her death in 1875; Captain Fenton died a few years earlier. He was a prominent figure in Tasmanian society, and for some time Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Colony.

In his *Australia and New Zealand*, Anthony Trollope tells some stories of the lives and fates of escaped convicts, and amongst others of one Markham, who made a retreat for himself in the bush, where he grew a little wheat, and reared some sheep, coming down occasionally, and stealing such articles as were essential to him. 'For seven years the man lived on in this way, all alone, undiscovered, sufficing in all things to himself—except in regard to those occasional thefts from his nearest neighbour. Then the solitude became too much for him, and he crept down to a neighbour's house—the squatter from whom he had been accustomed

to steal—and finding the mistress of the family, he gave himself up to her, in order that the law might do as it would with him. The squatter, who had been the man's prey, was an Irish gentleman with a tender heart, who felt thankful to the man for not having murdered his wife and family. Having position and influence, he interfered on the man's behalf, and the law was lenient and the man was pardoned. The story was told me by the lady to whom Markham had surrendered himself, wild, with long locks, clothed in a sheepskin, tired out with absolute independence. Now he is a prosperous grower of apples.'

The tender hearted Irishman of this story was Captain Fenton: one would like to have heard it told by his wife.

HENRY WALDEMAR LAWRENCE.

March 1901.

PART I: INDIA

I

JULY 17TH, 1826—JANUARY 3RD, 1827

Chinsurah, 7th January 1827.

MY DEAR AND KIND FRIEND,—Shortly after my arrival in Calcutta I sat down to write in reply to that letter which reached me on board the *Cornwall*; it seemed my last link with country, home, and all the heart's affections, and many a time and oft was it read: in truth, I think I could have repeated it verbatim from the fact of having placed it in my dressing-box, to which instinctively my hand reached on every day I was able to sit up to have my hair combed. After duly announcing my arrival, I had proceeded to give you all the *good reasons* which prevented my compliance with the request contained in that letter—at least *they were very sincere*—as it seemed quite absurd to suppose that where men of genius and learning had written on the subject, anything I could say should be worth reading; even to enter on a path where so many formidable competitors had gone before seemed *too* nearly allied to vanity. All this I clearly expressed, and doubted not that the truth of the statement would be as visible to yourself as to me. Once more I read your letter, and made a full stop at that passage where you say, 'No history of India, however wise and authentic, ever conveyed to me what I wished to know—a familiar picture of the everyday occurrences, manners, and

habits of life of persons undistinguished either by wealth or fame. I care not whether Ram Row was poisoned or strangled, but should like to be able to realise to my own mind the actual situation and pursuits of my many friends there, and above all, whatever may more particularly concern yourself.'

I perceived that what you wished for was within the sphere of my humble abilities, as it was to be no more than a longer letter, without form or plan; only an occasional detail of anything novel to one who never *had* been, and never *might* be, in India. And I recollected how often I had wished for the same and wished in vain, as the letters of those most dear and most capable of affording the desired information were chiefly engrossed by family affairs and anxious references to home. When I added to this consideration the remembrance that through all the past years of intimacy *you had conferred* and *I had received* kindness and obligation, I felt it would be worse than ungracious to neglect the first opportunity which the changes of life had given to afford you this slight gratification, and even should I fail in my *first* object I shall at least prove, that though I might want the power, I retained the *will* to amuse you; nor shall I consider it a task thus to devote an hour occasionally, for it preserves our companionship unbroken. . . .

My last letter to you was written on the 14th of July; the two days that succeeded were days of more fatigue and positive exertion than I had perhaps ever known before, because Campbell was so engaged by the accounts and final arrangements of the detachments he went in command of, he had no time to watch over me, as he was wont, that I might not do more than he is pleased to consider good for ~~me~~, and I truly rejoiced when I sat back in the carriage which drove us to Northfleet, and felt I had only to embark. The previous

night neither of us could sleep, though for some time we each forbore to speak, unwilling to disturb the other. At last, perceiving that the same feelings were operating on the minds of both, we found it consolatory to impart them. . . . It is at such moments of strong excitement that conformity in sentiment and opinion is a supreme blessing, and though I wept through many of those hours I ought to have slept, the soul-deep tenderness of Niel seemed a counterbalance to all that had passed or might hereafter come, or in the sweet verse of my namesake—

‘That come what will while life’s glad pulses roll,
Indissolubly thus should soul be knit to soul.’

On arriving at Northfleet I was so completely exhausted that I gladly arranged to sleep there and defer my embarkation until next morning. Niel, however, was obliged to go on board, and I entered the worst inn perhaps in England. It was Saturday evening, and a number of workmen had met to smoke and drink ale. How much I was struck by the difference between this class here and in my own contemned and unhappy country. There every soul would have risen on the entrance of a lady; here, they only gave half-savage laughs, and puffed their vile pipes in my face as I went through the room. I felt quite nervous from many causes, and sat anxiously waiting Niel’s return from the *Cornwall*, which floated gaily on the ocean before us. He came at length, delighted with the accommodation reserved for me, and the courteous manners of the captain, to whom he had promised I should go on board after church next day; a large party were to dine. But Sunday morning found me so ill, that I, with much regret, was obliged to let Campbell go alone to church. It was a disappointment at that hour to be unable

to unite in prayers for ourselves and all we loved. Captain Campbell (my old Derry acquaintance) of the 47th accompanied him, and on their return, though so weak that I had to hold the table for support, I was ready to go on board. After Niel carried me into the boat and the fresh air blew strong on my face, I revived. In about ten minutes I was on board the ship, where Captain Younghusband's reception justified Niel's previous opinion. He seemed a remarkably well-bred old gentleman, with something of that grace and cordiality which sometimes marks the higher grade of naval officers. His countenance, too, seemed unaccountably familiar, and he introduced me most gallantly as the only lady he was so fortunate as to receive, to the others. His sister and her husband, a Mr. Pittar, were on board, in escort of a younger brother of Mr. P.'s, who was going to join an eminent house of business in Calcutta.

The rest of the party were military. A Captain White came on board with his son, a boy just gazetted into the 13th, and after a little conversation between Campbell and the father, they discovered that an elder brother had resided with and died in the house of Niel's brother in Ceylon. The poor father seemed much affected, and entreated us to counsel the lad on board, whom Niel faithfully promised to attend to.

There were two other military men of whom I knew a little and liked much, Mr. Sandes of the 47th, and Maxwell of the 14th, a nephew of the Lord Belmore of travelling memory; and in truth he was an elegant, aristocratic looking lad, for I believe he had seen no more than nineteen summers.

During the time of dinner I could not help looking at Mrs. Pittar with *more* than polite attention, to discover where I had seen her before, and, as the misty veil of memory and

time floated off I found it was her likeness to Major Young-husband, who had formerly been on General Hart's staff, that perplexed me. I could not forbear asking the Captain if they were connected; he replied, They were brothers, and this little circumstance became subject of converse for many a vacant hour; and *I* thought of the days when it was my favourite pastime, while the Major was engaged in the newspaper, to fasten the ribbon which it was the taste of the times to attach to the hair as a queue, to the back of the chair, and sit patiently under the table to await the exhibition of his wrath at being thus entangled.

Two sons of the Captain, elegant young men, were to accompany us to Dover. Captain Campbell and Lintott of the 13th were of that party, and I lay down for the first time on my sea-couch, almost wondering how agreeably the day had passed. On the morning of Monday we got under weigh; all was bustle, and while Niel was engaged with the soldiers, Campbell and Lintott busied themselves in arranging my cabin. Niel had taken so much trouble to collect every accommodation for me, that it very soon looked as neat as a drawing-room. My books, my writing-box, my work-table were all assigned to their fitting positions, and I received many congratulations on the air of comfort and spacious dimensions of my cabin, which Campbell faithfully promised to report to my sister on his return to Ireland, that she might at least know I was well taken care of.

I will spare you a detail of the voyage after the parting adieux were made; indeed there is little to relate beyond the oft-told tale of sickness and suffering, of being daily more exhausted, and the weakness of my body being extended to my mind. I often wept through the long, dreadful night after home and relatives, that I believed myself divided from for

ever, as I did not think it possible that nature once so much enfeebled could renovate. My efforts to resist (for indeed I did strive) only reduced my strength, and those who spoke of comfort seemed to mock me, or were unable to comprehend my real misery. How unreasonable does suffering often make us, for there was every possible care, sympathy, and attention lavished on me by the whole party; being the only lady on board, the aid of every one was at my service, and Mr. Rhodes, the surgeon, almost lived in our cabin.

But all would not do; I was nearly wasted to a shadow, and I need scarcely add, the progress of this voyage seemed eternity itself, for even those who were free from suffering felt it an ordeal; the calmest tempers, to say the least, become restless, and the irritable torment themselves and others. Nor is it surprising, for certainly nature never designed man to be a dweller on the mighty waters; after a short time the interminable sea becomes alike weariness to the eye and imagination.

I cannot think without wonder on the change a few weeks has produced; so completely was I subdued, I fancied that every avenue to pleasure was closed for ever, while *now* let me thankfully acknowledge I never enjoyed more perfect health and energy.

The changes of temperature when felt for the first time are somewhat extraordinary. I had never thought on the matter, and was quite unprepared for the cold of the high southern latitudes, and also unprovided with suitable clothing; even sleeping with a fur tippet on I shivered with cold; and the same circumstance which makes the round-house so pleasant in warm weather, produces a contrary effect where wind and sleet are driving you about. The worst consequence of this was, that during one of the nights when I had fancied it

pleasanter to sleep on the deck than in my cot or on my couch, the rain penetrated through the cuddy under the doors of my cabin and in the morning I found we had all night lain in blankets wetted with fresh water; the consequence of this was, Niel was laid up with inflammation of the lungs, and I was then taught that there are trials more severe than bodily pain. The illness of one you are deeply interested in is at all times afflicting, but how much more so in a situation precluding all the comforts and alleviations required by an invalid. I have thought, if I could but stand by his cot to afford him the aid he required, I should be happy; I have arisen, and in the effort to reach him been whirled from one side of the cabin against the other. Yet at this time I was more free from sickness myself. On the night he was first seriously ill, I was able to stand and hold the basin for his being bled, which if any one had told me when I went to bed, I should have affirmed it an impossibility. I have sat up whole nights in my couch, watching his breathing and fearing to sleep lest he might omit taking his medicine.

However, it pleased God to restore him after we regained a warmer latitude—enough of *sea sickness* and *sea sorrows*! Let me pass the interval until the 17th of November, when we saw a bunch of bamboo floating on the current of the stream perceptible in the ocean, and after reaching the sandheads passed some unpleasant days looking out for the pilot, by whom we received the first intelligence of the termination of the Burman War. This removed from my mind a heavy load of care, which had become more insupportable as the time drew near when the event must be decided. Impatient as I was to get on shore, I waited the arrival of the pilot with breathless dread, being prepared to hear the troops must proceed to Rangoon. Judge you then of the unspeakable delight with which I heard

of *Peace* and of the regiment being on the way to a healthy station.

My only solicitude then was to know of my dearest brothers, how and where they were, and soon another cause of thankfulness was afforded me in finding they were well, and had been defended and spared among all the ravages of sword and pestilence. Everything I wished had been granted me, and infinitely more than I had dared to hope, so I believe no stranger ever landed on these Eastern shores with more happiness than I then felt, and *still* experience—though I try to keep in mind that the cup of which all must drink is filled with mingled ingredients and none ever tasted thereof without alloy. But, I pray that when my Heavenly Father sees it fitting to dry up some of these my present sources of comfort, His mercy may accompany the dispensation and strengthen my reliance on Him, who knows my weakness, and will not afflict me beyond what I am able to support.

With what eager interests you watch the first objects which denote your arrival on a new soil, from the moment you see the Island of Sagur like a small cloud on the horizon! then you perceive it thick with mighty forests, you distinguish separate trees, and their luxuriant foliage is so refreshing to your eyes. Presently you are surrounded with bamboo boats filled with natives, presenting fish or fruit all equally strange. My gratification was quite childish; I sat hour after hour in the stern window, with a beautiful child belonging to a soldier, of whom we had made quite a plaything, and my delight was not less than his in watching the dandies cooking their curry! The Dak (*i.e.* post) boat soon came alongside. The postmaster at Kedgerree had perceived a lady on deck and politely sent her a basket of oranges, pummeloes, and bananas, none of which was I suffered to taste by the assiduity of the Doctor and

Niel. I tried to console myself by eating a whole loaf of delicious bread, for I experienced a degree of hunger beyond all reason. Some cows were brought on board for the crew and troops, which appeared not much larger than English calves. I suppose it was the revolution in my appetite which made everything placed before me seem superexcellent, and astonished the party at breakfast.

As I sat writing to James I heard a boat strike alongside, and in a moment saw Niel exchanging a most vehement welcome with a fine-looking military man, whom he introduced to me as his cousin Allen Steuart, who after many greetings announced himself come for the purpose of taking me on shore to the house of his niece; they had seen our arrival in the paper, and he instantly set off to take me out of the confusion of disembarking. I knew him and his niece by name and character, but had never met either, and did not much relish the idea of being sent adrift among strangers, or under any circumstances divided from Niel, but both were urgent and Niel almost positive that I should go. The turn of the tide was favourable, and almost before I knew where I was they collected some dressing things for my use, and with a basket of cold fowl and ham, I was seated on my mattress in the beauliah looking back on Niel and my former companions.

I found Captain Steuart a very Highlander in everything, and determined to render me comfortable and at ease. We soon became familiar on the subjects of home and clanship. When the sun declined we found a seat on the top of the boat agreeable, and the novelty of the scene soon occupied all my attention. The distance between Diamond Harbour and Calcutta is about seventy miles; country boats run up in two tides; calculating all delays, generally twenty-four hours is enough. These simple structures, formed of bamboo and

sewed with cocoa-nut, have the advantage in point of lightness over those of more elegant appearance termed beauliahs. These latter are painted green, looking like a hut in a boat, the sides formed of Venetians.

Though the banks of the river are quite flat the luxuriant vegetation and the variety of tropical productions all interest the eye of a European, and certainly, in point of picturesque effect, the groups of bamboo huts are unrivalled; they are invariably shaded by trees of the most majestic growth, and interspersed with the slender stems of the cocoa, whose lofty and feathery boughs, or rather leaves, wave with the slightest impulse when all others are motionless. But it would be endless to enumerate all those features which constitute the beauty and the novelty of an Indian landscape. I was never weary of admiring the bamboo, it grows in clumps like the willow; the long and flexible branches stretch in a thousand fantastic shapes around the cottages, which are also built or woven of their boughs, for many of them are no more than basket work. In strong contrast with this delicate tree, and generally close in its vicinity, grows the plantain; the long, silky leaves, of a beautiful pale green, provide the natives with an excellent substitute for paper or napkins; they put up all small things in them, and it is a comfort to reflect they are perfectly pure and clean; I have seen them two yards long. The fruit grows in clusters of pods, somewhat like a bean, of beautiful yellow or red; it eats like a mealy pear with less flavour. The leaves possess another recommendation in being the best remedy I know for the grievous visitation of mosquito bites, which if unguardedly inflamed become incredibly troublesome and often dangerous. After binding one on my foot for the night, I found the swelling so much abated that I could walk next day.

The object which attracts you next may be a mosque or a pagoda, surrounded by mangoes or built under a majestic banyan tree, whose self-creating branches droop around into such beautiful arches. Then some rows of tamarind, the leaves much like the mountain ash; the fruit grows in pods, which when ripe are of a mahogany brown; they make a nice syrup. If it is the season for pummelo or citron, they seem of such a beautiful bright yellow you think of fables of golden apples and many other fanciful ideas. You can hardly believe their size; at first I waited to see them fall. Then there is the papaw, resembling long melons, growing below the leaves round the stem of the tree.

But I must not keep you too long among the woods, especially as we are now sailing on the river and night making rapid advances. Twilight there is *none*, but the air was so balmy and warm we continued to sit on the top of the boat beneath the blue and starry skies. Allen Steuart had a country boat for his own accommodation during the night, and after doing all he could to arrange my mattress and make me comfortable we separated, hoping to be near the city of palaces by the morning. I lay down, first rolling a gauze handkerchief round my head to keep off the mosquitoes. I tried to sleep, but no! the motion of the boat, the jargon of the dandies, the wild, dire cries of the jackals on the banks all forbid it. Finding I could not sleep, I rose and opened the Venetian blinds, as the clearness of the air permitted me to distinguish the trees, mosques, and huts we sailed by. At last some change of tide or wind obliged us to stop, and Captain Steuart's boat came alongside to know how I felt. He had been striving to keep his boat from outstripping mine, supposing I was enough of a lady to be afraid of being alone.

I was glad when morning rose and gave me a clearer view of the surrounding scenery, as we were now before some large houses. In this climate, where all the productions of nature seem to flourish in lavish and enduring fertility, the rapid decay which attends each work of man is striking and somewhat melancholy. The style of building is light and generally elegant, the houses are surrounded by verandahs supported by pillars which give a graceful and elegant character to the whole fabric. The rains have such a destructive influence on everything that I am told each house requires an entire repair every three years, exhibiting in that time a more ruinous aspect than one in England neglected for centuries will do. The Venetian windows rot and fall out, the white or yellow walls become blackened and seem like houses destroyed by fire—the resting-place for birds and beasts of prey. The fearful familiarity of the former almost startles you; it would be difficult to fancy anything so ferocious as the vulture, especially if you see them first as I did, in the act of contending for and tearing their prey. Kites, crows, and hawks fly actually in clouds around you.

The adjutant stands from three to four feet high, something like a huge crane in colour and shape, the neck bare of feathers, the beak of a whitish hue and at least a quarter of a yard in length, embellished with a bag or pocket for bones, fish or anything they can find. A medical man on whose veracity I rely, told me he had been brought to attend a little girl who had been carried to the top of a house by one of these feathered monsters.

Do you recollect in that entertaining book, *Sayings and Doings*, the tale in which an eccentric Indian sends to the care of his elegant and rather simple niece two adjutants and a snake, and the well-bred despair of poor Mary who, instead

of what she was prepared to receive, two dashing officers, encountered the monsters she expected must devour her children? I am of opinion this production will outlive most that have been published for the last ten years, particularly the second series, containing the inimitable story of *Passion and Principle*. How often in the North-West gales off the Cape I thought of the sufferings of Fanny; I hope you may never know how faithfully the description is given.

As soon as my companion perceived I was dressed, he came to my boat and we resumed our seat on the top. Oh! how beautiful is the Indian sunrise—but more of this hereafter. As morning waned into day we both began to feel that breakfast would be an agreeable variation of our pursuits, of which there was but little prospect as we were yet ten or fifteen miles from Calcutta. So it was proposed by Captain Steuart that we should stop at the house of a lady with whom he was acquainted.

In about an hour after, a sudden reach of the river disclosed the City of Palaces. But much, very much, is lost of its effect by lying so low; the distant view, too, from the river is so mingled with the shipping that it is not very satisfactory. We were now before the ghaut at the residence of Mrs. Cleland, to whom Allen Steuart went on to announce my arrival, and returned with a very kind and pressing invitation. I felt a curious sensation on treading for the first time on the ground, as we walked through the compound where the lady of the mansion waited, who was indeed most prepossessing in appearance, but almost painfully delicate to look on, so fair, almost wan in complexion, which the contrast of being dressed in mourning increased. She offered me a bath and all the luxuries of her elegant mansion and, after we had breakfasted, insisted on my spending the rest of the day with her, arranging

that Captain Steuart should go on and bring his niece next morning at eight to breakfast and spend the morning. All this was concluded, and I saw my first acquaintance depart, and had to commence another with the two ladies with whom I was so abruptly domesticated. The second person was a Miss —— who did not seem to me an attractive specimen of Indian young ladies, and you may guess my astonishment to see her deliberately sit down after breakfast to smoke a cheroot. As nature had not been very liberal of attraction I really thought she might have spared herself the effort of being more disagreeable. However, this was *her* concern, not mine, and shortly after my kind and gentle hostess advised me to undress and go to bed, as I must feel the effects of the journey, to which I willingly assented.

I think one of the first impressions on the mind of an English stranger is the utter want of comfort exhibited in an Indian sleeping apartment. *Your* idea of a bedroom—and it was *mine* also—is that of a retirement, a sanctuary where none can or will intrude! and how various are the situations in this life of many trials, when to shut the door and say, ‘I am alone’ is all the sick heart wants and all the solace it can receive. From long indulgence this feeling became second nature to me. I believe I often carried it too far and felt uncomfortable, when either chance or necessity obliged me to dress or undress in the room with any other—even when ill I disliked an attendant.

I can hardly tell you my perplexity when Mrs. C. brought me into a spacious room and wished me good repose. ‘Ye Powers!’ thought I, ‘*who* could sleep in a room where four doors and four windows all stand open?’ My next determination was ‘they shall be shut,’ and I began to go round the room with this resolve, but found my labour in vain, as all

were unblest with either lock or bolt, indicating *too* plainly that Indian doors were not supposed to shut. So not Richmond but the open doors 'did murder sleep.'

My bed stood in the middle of the floor without curtains, with pillows as hard as the table and about the size of a pin-cushion. There was only one chair in the room, and I looked in vain for some place to put my clothes, or a basin of water to wash. Observe, I had declined the service of Mrs. C.'s ayah, who with her attendant of lower caste is always supposed to stand at your side to *put on* and *take off* your clothes—a ceremony which nothing could ever induce me to comply with. (I could not endure their hands about me; the oil which forms a part of their toilet, the pawn they eat, renders them so offensive that I could not bear them in my room; they are so insatiably curious; they try to make it appear they are indispensable to your comfort, and fall on a thousand contrivances to keep always in your way and a perpetual watch on all you do. They attend you with the most disgusting servility if they have any end to attain, then perhaps decamp with whatever they can strip you of. They never work, and if you were in the utmost perplexity or want of a needlewoman, can render you no assistance.) You need not wonder I have lost all good will for them, and much prefer the attendance of a bearer, who answers equally well to fetch or carry anything you want, and can be sent off when you are done with him.

However, to every lady I have met, but myself, these women are necessary. I am satisfied it is in many cases from ostentation, for I see those depend most on them whose early life was spent in menial offices at home, and whom nature never designed for anything higher. One of these said in my hearing the other day, 'she could not put on her

own stocking.' I had good reason to know she seldom had any to wear before she was sent to India.

This is a long digression but must have been told to explain why I felt so comfortless in my apartment. I looked into the next room where an ayah lay on the floor, on which was strewn many articles of a lady's dress; she seemed so like a dog keeping watch on them. There stood many articles of which I should have felt the comfort, but did not like to intrude. Nor did I then understand that close by was a bathing-room which would have added so much to my satisfaction. (When I did lie down I forgot the necessity of having the mosquito curtains arranged—the vile insects settled upon me; the adjutant flew down on the verandah off the trees, the crows perched on the windows—and at last I rose in despair, giving up the point as hopeless, though so much exhausted by the preceding night's fatigue.

Everything seemed still within and about the house. The stillness of the noonday in India I often after found more dreary than night. The birds flew, the boats sailed languidly by the ghât. Mrs. Cleland had said she hoped I should be sufficiently refreshed to join them at tiffin. It was now twelve, and I felt that sort of *mental confusion* and weariness which put *thinking* at defiance; so, peeping into the next apartment to be sure it was unoccupied, I made a hasty seizure of a book off the couch and a small punkah which instinct taught me was to aid me in defence of the mosquitoes. About the appointed hour I made my second appearance, found Mrs. C. at work and Miss ——— extended on a couch, busied in the contents of a large box which two half-naked creatures brought in between them, containing lace, ribbons, muslin, and all sorts of European manufacture, which *only* is considered stylish here. A few moments taught me two

things—first, that these itinerant merchants were termed ‘Box-Wallers’ (*sic*), and that the survey of their merchandise constitutes an important part of the daily employ of half the ladies in India. The mode of treatment to these poor wretches first *astonished* then *amused* me. ¶ The box-waller was informed by both ladies that he was a thief, to which he assented with profound salaams, observing that ‘whatever Mem Sahib said was right.’ He was then asked ‘what brought him, as they did not want him,’ though the bearer had been told to send him up. He was next told to go away, and then to show his things, which all the time he had been quietly preparing to do. The first article, a piece of chintz he handed Miss —, she dismissed by throwing at his head, to my unequivocal horror. Another and another and another shared the same fate, until a petticoat of scarlet and blue was chosen for the ayah. Then came the tug-of-war, about the price, for fair ladies consider it highly meritorious to reduce their demands to the lowest possible. They seemed to me so very poor, wretched and abject, I do believe if I had possessed any money I should have given it to them. After this divertisement was over we went downstairs to tiffin spread in the hall, which is no other than a small dinner, excepting that the dishes are placed on the table without a cloth, which at first has an unpleasant appearance.)

On returning to the drawing-room I was very closely questioned as to the last English fashions, length of waists, and shape of sleeves and shoes. I was not then aware of the importance of possessing a stock of dresses fresh from the Regent Street mint. ¶ After a short interval I found the custom was for all to retire after tiffin until the evening ride or drive, which is never before four—here was another two hours to be disposed of. ¶ So again I undressed, first possessing

myself of another book, of which I soon tired, and began to wonder and to wish for Niel's appearance, but this I knew could not be until he had delivered up his charge of the men. As I lay in bed I could see the lengthening shadows fall on the river, and soon experienced the delightful and refreshing influence of evening. I was hardly dressed before Mrs. Cleland came to invite me to drive out if such was my choice, or if a walk to the river and seat by its bank might be equally agreeable, until Mr. C.'s return from Calcutta about seven. I preferred the walk, and strolled along the compound, where every shrub and flower was an object of interest. The bearers, who seem to know all your intentions and wishes intuitively, were waiting with chairs to place wherever we might approve, and thus we sat until the arrival of Mr. Cleland. (Introduction, then news of the day, brought eight o'clock and dinner, and though this was a family party, the number of attendants and variety of dishes made it seem a formal and ceremonious proceeding, which, though it lasted very, very long, at last terminated in cheroot-smoking by all present but myself. After the appearance of servants and tea in the drawing-room, the languor of all the company expressed that the next best thing was going to bed; something was said about early rising, and we all departed.) I was beginning to sleep very comfortably towards the middle of the night, as it seemed, when I heard an universal stir through the house. I heard voices and talk of horses, hats, whips, coffee; I sat up, wondering what it could mean. Presently I was accosted by a voice at the door inquiring if I would ride or drive. I signified my apology, but wondered not the less what driving in the middle of the night could mean—however it was then near four o'clock, but utterly dark.

Then the rest of the party had the advantage of me in the

time of rising, as they all returned to bed again. I was dressed and roaming about the vacant rooms and verandahs until the hour of eight brought Captain Steuart and Mrs. Allan. She was a very fine-looking young woman of nineteen, without much Scotch accent, altogether prepossessing and attractive. She expressed much cordiality, and spoke of Niel, his mother, and sisters with affection. She seemed so light-hearted and ingenuous, I thought with regret, 'how time must come with all its blights.'

The style here is, if persons live at a distance and wish to visit, they go to breakfast and remain until the hour for the evening drive. This is a system I much like; it disposes of ceremony at once; and this day passed much as the former had, and about five o'clock I prepared to accompany Mrs. Allan to the residence of Ballygunge, two miles beyond Calcutta in the opposite direction, with many kind adieux from Mrs. C., and promises soon to renew my visit and introduce my husband.

As we drove out of the compound, the evening sun was falling in such splendour on the spires of Bishop's College, which stood on the other side of the river. It forms a beautiful addition to the scenery at this point of the river, and in itself is an interesting object, the style Gothic, and shaded by fine cedar and palmira trees; a pretty church has just been finished. An impervious forest forms the background of the picture. It has been built with the view of promoting Christian knowledge in India, in converting the Hindoos; and you know I am rather hard of conviction on this head, but to offer any opinion at present on the expediency of the measure would be very premature; nothing *has been* effected at present, they are only *educating teachers* I am told, and the progress is slow; besides I can gather that the super-

intendent is not very popular, or considered likely to give good graces to the attempt. We had also a distant view of the Botanic Garden which adjoins the College; I long to pay it a visit. The last I saw was in Glasgow, where I particularly marked a plantain tree, how feeble in comparison of those I see around me now.

Our drive to Calcutta for about six miles was interesting by the number and variety of beautiful houses belonging to the wealthy inhabitants of Calcutta, whose employments, civil or military, in the city, render a country-house an agreeable variety. You would suppose Aladdin's lamp was in circulation here/ . . .

But the advance of twilight concluded my observations until we reached our resting-place, where Mr. Allan was waiting our arrival, from whom I experienced a very kind reception. He seemed a well-informed and intelligent person. There appeared a large party for dinner, as I then imagined; but it was nothing more than the usual mode of life, and soon I thought it a thing of course too, yet could not help looking joyfully to the time when I should possess a more private residence.

A few days more brought Niel, and then I was completely happy, as he enjoyed perfect health and a degree of spirits and excitement I had never before known him to possess. He was ordered to join the depôt at Chinsurah until arrangements were made for sending the detachments on; but, after disposing of them *there*, the Commandant very kindly dispensed with his personal attendance, that he might return to me at Calcutta and make preparation for our voyage up the river.

Time flew rapidly; you can do very little in one day in India, *for this cause* that you can hardly *do anything* for yourself, and whatever you must perform through the medium

of a native is both loss of time and wreck of patience. A number of the 13th were in Calcutta, and we had constant visiting. As Niel had been anything but a ladies' man, there was some curiosity to see the one who captivated him. Among others, I saw my old friend Macpherson, who is a sad wreck of himself, but kind and warm-hearted as ever. Poor fellow, the last time I saw him was at Kilderry, he had come to bid me farewell and bring me a letter from Campbell: he is going to the Nilgherry hills. Between visitors, writing letters, and arranging my clothes, the day glides away, and it is time to dress for driving before I know how the hours have fled. The evening rendezvous, the Course, is our usual destination, as all persons who can command, borrow, or steal an equipage, make a point of appearing there.

After once seeing it,—its mixture of all nations, conditions, and customs, the strong contrast of luxury and indigence, from the gay chariot of Lady Amherst to the humble hackney of the native drawn by starved bullocks, or four thin, emaciated palkee bearers, bending under the weight of eighteen stone of European flesh,—though I still returned from the effect of habit, it was with a feeling of melancholy. In the first place, when I saw the sun set, gorgeous in all the hues of a tropic sky, I could not cease to think that the evening hour of January was then gathering around the hearth in my native home, so far, far distant, my beloved family! and that *there* were those who would long view my vacant place with sorrow, and sweet voices of infancy who would often ask wherefore it remained vacant. And shall it continue ever thus?

‘Shall spacious lands and mountains tall
Between us lie, and billows curled;
And tho' one Home contained us all,
Our graves be scattered o'er the world!’

How exquisitely does Mrs. Hemans in the 'Graves of a Household' embody this thought, so that you feel an *individual* regret, and my sympathy was not excited most strongly for him who is described 'To sleep where pearls lie deep,' though the loved of all, nor yet for her, 'o'er whom the myrtle showers its leaves'—but for him—(perhaps from association of ideas)

'Who in the forests of the West
By a dark stream is laid.
The Indian knows his place of rest
Far in the cedar shade!'

Some day, when I have nothing else to write, I will copy the poem, which perchance you may not have met.

But to return from the rainbow forms of imagination to myself, Bessie Campbell. At times the hopelessness of our ever again being re-united absorbed my mind, which sickened at the pageantry of the scene. These thoughts were, however, confined to my own breast, for when Jane Allan and Niel were my companions they were gaiety itself, and talked or sang fragments of Gaelic songs half the time. However, I was not always so agreeably associated, and the conversation of my female acquaintances seldom went beyond the scandal or the fashion of the day, which to listen to in *this* frame of mind was dreadful, and you used to pay me the compliment of saying, I concerned myself less with the affairs or conduct of others than any one you knew.

Our route to this conflux of idleness and vanity conducted us by an extensive burying-ground. The tombs are very lofty, and though generally purely white at first, the climate soon defaces and renders them truly melancholy, which effect is heightened by the dark undying foliage of the cypress.

'Within the place of thousand tombs
Which shine beneath, while dark above
The sad, but living cypress glooms
And withers not, though branch and leaf
Are stamped with an eternal grief,
Like early, unrequited Love!'

I used to gaze, almost with tears, when I remembered *how many* lay there who had constituted the sole hope of some heartbroken mother, wife, or sister! and while this idea was yet thrilling to my heart's core, another turn would bring us into the gay scene I have been describing.

Just at this period, too, many hours of the day were passed in the sick room of Allen Steuart, who had been dangerously ill of fever, which I grieved to think was in some degree occasioned by exposure to the air of the river and jungle in bringing me from the ship, and continuing in wet clothes going to Chinsurah with Niel a few days after. How deeply did I feel from this contrast 'that in the midst of life you are in death.'

After driving until it is dark you return to dress for dinner about eight. I have been so assured that I cannot live without an ayah that in compliance with custom and opinion I have been obliged to take one, for what use I do not yet know, as I keep her at the outside of my door until I am dressed, and am so well satisfied with Niel's proficiency in the science of tying strings and putting in pins that I much prefer him; besides, it interrupts our only moment for conversation to have this creature standing gazing at us. Then we always make a rule that whichever is first dressed shall read some portion of the Bible, for if it is not done before we leave our room so many things interrupt during the day that it is seldom done after. (As a great favour I allow the ayah to plait my hair, which they do beautifully, and Niel

is so vain of my hair he stands by to inspect the performance!

You will expect of me some account of society here, but I still am incapable of forming a fair estimate from its perpetual fluctuation. (You rarely meet the same party twice. If military, they are generally proceeding to or from the Upper Provinces, perhaps trying to get off from India before they are quite dead, and often in weak health and obliged to commit their affairs to others, by whose rapacity they are too much depressed either to amuse or be amused! For myself, from the effects of the climate and continual bustle and excitement, by the time I had dressed and sat out a long dinner I felt well-nigh stupefied and ready, like the prophetess of Odin, to say—

‘ Now my weary lips I close,
Leave—oh leave me to repose.’

Although repose may have been earned by fatigue, to be able to sleep in Calcutta or its vicinity is not always a matter of certainty. It is quite impossible to give you any just idea of the fearful cries of the jackals who frequently come to your verandah; they do not merely howl, but they set up a lengthened, varying cry, so like a human creature in intense agony, I defy you to sleep under such painful associations. In addition to these tormentors *outside*, *within* you have muskrats, lizards, mosquitoes, cockroaches, and bugs, so that you know not on which side to prepare your defence. Yet I am told at this season only the climate and country are endurable. The hot wind and rainy season is pronounced by all to be terrible. At present, I often feel it so cold at night and in the morning, I am glad to wear a shawl. There is a misty dampness in the air, partly from all the doors and windows lying open, which sometimes occasions a regretful thought on the curtained window and blazing fire of England.

Though so destitute of drapery, the rooms when well lit up have a good effect; the lights being placed within glass shades round the walls, their being so much above your eyes is pleasant. When I asked last night in the simplicity of my heart, how I was to work with lights so distant, I was informed that ladies never *work*. When your ayah considers any of your clothes require repair, she with due solemnity hands them to your *dirzie* (tailor) who sits for that purpose on the mat in the verandah. Moreover I am told it is not fashionable ever to see my clothes until putting them on, the aforesaid lady taking them in charge, also money, keys, ornaments; I resolved before I subscribed unconditionally to this arrangement to try how I liked it, as it seems very miserable if I must have this blackfaced thing always at my elbow.

A set of servants have been transferred to me by an officer going home, at least those connected with the table, and (they are eight in number—a cook, a mussolgee, who is a sort of cook's attendant and holds a lanthorn, which none of the bearers will do, as perchance it might have been made of a bow; a khaunsamah, or principal attendant at table, who receives your orders and purchases all things for food, or, as it is termed, 'makes your bazaar,' of which, I am told, some of the conditions are curious. He considers it his perquisite to deduct two annas—which is about threepence—from every rupee he expends; they only acknowledge *one*, so fancy what a tax is here. In addition to this extortion he buys a fowl for three annas and charges it in his bill eight or twelve; he pays three rupees for a piece of beef and gives it to you five; he buys a leg of mutton for eight annas and charges two rupees; the same down to the smallest vegetable, so fancy what he gains from every dinner you order. There are two

kitmutgars, who stand by your chair and all but cut your food. The khaunsamah is only supposed to carry in the last dish, the soup, and, standing behind his lady's chair, to superintend. The dishes, all but large joints, are handed round the table, and when you go to dine or breakfast out your retinue still attend, for no other person's servant will wait on you, and at the conclusion of the feast the door-keeper takes especial care to search each one who passes out, so that none of your spoons or forks may disappear with them.)

Next, there is a bheestie, whose sole employment is to carry water, filling your drinking and bathing vessels out of a wondrous-looking leather bag or skin of a sheep; a sweeper, who is to sweep your mats twice in the day; then a dobee or washerman. I am told we still require about eight or ten others:—four bearers, two of whom are to attend Niel, the sirdar bearer holding the same place in a gentleman's retinue that the ayah does in a lady's. But as we still retain our faithful Irishman in charge of our things at Chinsurah and intend taking him on with us, Niel declines the pleasure of his personal attendants, at least until we reach Dinapore; and I was of opinion that, when I became my own mistress at Chinsurah, I should free myself of the ayah, and content myself with the occasional attendance of Eliza Sherock, who had most affectionately waited on me at sea, and whose husband was of our party. When I went out to inspect this regiment of servants I was much amused by the humble enquiry of the khaunsamah: 'If Mem Sahib was very passionate.'

On Christmas day we dined at the house of a Persian lady. The first thing I saw in the morning was the verandah strewn with flowers, and coolies sitting with baskets of oranges and various fruit and vegetables covered with blossoms and leaves.

This is a ceremony never omitted by your servants in honour of the day, which I need not tell you they expect to be tenfold repaid for, and on their own festivals and birthdays they repeat it until your patience is worn out.

I felt rather sad on the thought of home, and the blank left in both Niel's family and mine. His dear old mother told me she made a rule to write to her absent children on this day, so I shall look for a letter about the middle of May. All I have been preparing are ready to sail in the *Cambria Castle* on the 27th. Instead of driving, Niel and myself preferred a stroll into the jungle, for the mere pleasure of walking and being alone, to talk of home, of the future, and the past, and prolonged our ramble until I had just time to dress for dinner. I must tell you I had a violent curiosity to see this Persian lady; I suppose I was thinking of Lalla Rookh and Hinda.

‘Light as the Angel shapes that bless
An infant's dream, tho' not the less
Rich in all woman's loveliness.’

But when I was introduced to a little woman about four feet ten, almost as broad as she was long, in the *act of smoking* a hookah, I nearly expressed my amazement audibly. I suppose it was to give this symmetry better effect that she had arrayed herself in a stiff China satin of the most showy pattern. She was, however, a perfect queen of diamonds; wore three necklaces, one of splendid emeralds and diamonds, valuable in themselves but frightfully set; another just clasping the throat, of large beautiful pearls; a third of fine gold, besides appendages of all sorts, such as crosses, hearts, etc., bracelets, and rings. The lady's hair was also worthy of remark, being dusted with something that gave it a vermilion shade, and twisted up without curl or plait.

Moore ought to be beheaded at least for sending my wits dreaming; perchance Nourmahal may have been in a different style, when the magnificent son of Akbar, we are informed by the song—

‘Preferred in his heart, the least ringlet that curled
Down her exquisite neck, to the throne of the world.’

However, let me acknowledge that however ill-selected were the lady’s dress and ornaments, her conversation and manners were superior to those of many Europeans. She was at once intelligent and unpretending, though I am told a person of rank in her own court.

II

JANUARY 3RD—FEBRUARY 25TH, 1827

IT would be tiresome to you if I were to detail day by day my occupations, nor do I now recollect much more connected with Calcutta likely to interest, therefore I may pass on until our departure for Chinsurah, where all the officers and men proceeding to the Upper Provinces were directed to assemble in preparation for our voyage. After a good deal of confusion in collecting all things requisite, furnishing our floating house, arranging with our servants, behold us at last on board our budgerow, which, when once put in order, seemed to me the most agreeable habitation I had yet been mistress of. But how shall I describe to you the shape and fashion of a budgerow? unless you will assist me by fancying you see a small house in a boat, I know not how to do it, and yet I *have seen* the exact similitude on some of my grandmother's cups and saucers, jars and vases, which, along with their other embellishments of hanging bridges and flying foxes, excited my wonder and consternation; and here it is worthy of remark how exactly they depict the present costume; Atcheen Boss, who provides my shoes, exhibits precisely such a head and sleeves as you will see on the flower-pot.

From the sides being formed of Venetians, we can have as much or as little of the prospect as we like—the same of the air and sun. There are three rooms, all nicely matted; the

first, our sitting-room, is sufficiently large to hold in the centre a table where eight persons may dine comfortably, a crimson satin couch at each side, where we sit in the evening when all the blinds are taken up; a small table, here called a teapoy, in each corner; one contains my writing box, another Niel's, two others our books. We have chairs and bamboo moras, and footstools, *here* my workbox, *there* Niel's *beloved gun case*; and when the door is shut and we gliding pleasantly on, you cannot fancy a more neat and agreeable apartment. The inner one has our couch, dressing table, washing ditto, two chests of drawers, and the last is a sort of bathing place. Such is our budgerow, which has sixteen oars to row when convenient, or track with ropes, the dandies walking along the bank; though it seems laborious I do not believe it is so in reality; once afloat, a small impulse onward is sufficient. We have also a baggage boat for all superfluous and heavy articles, and a cooking boat, on the top of which the dobee and all his tribe seem very comfortably established. These boats are formed of bamboo and covered with matting; they are styled 'country boats.' 16.C.45

We left Calcutta on the morning of the 3rd, the night before having come on board through heavy rain and thunder, attended by several friends, all kindly trying to assist in arranging our servants, for please to keep in mind, they know as little of English as we do of Hindoostanee, except my khaunsamah, who acknowledges to speak a little English, which they are generally very unwilling to do. The supposition of their being ignorant gives them so many opportunities of hearing what they otherwise might not.

The banks of the river are in many places beautiful, after you lose sight of Calcutta. I found occupation for the whole morning in arranging our things and supplying the khaun-

samah with culinary matters. Instead of dining at eight, we changed the hour to three, and substituted tea at seven or eight, as we could thus have all the evening to walk, and a sufficient length of morning to read, write and work.

Next morning we stopped at Serhampore to breakfast, and walked for an hour in the interval. There is not much to be seen, the buildings are chiefly in ruins. There is rather a pretty-looking church, but, sad to tell, the path to its entrance is overgrown with grass and weeds. There are many houses which once may have been handsome and commodious, now uninhabited, and 'tis wonderful how soon trees, weeds, and flowers rise in rank luxuriance, straggling in all directions. I looked regretfully at the unpruned roses, pale and withering, and the rich and glowing flowers of the pomegranate alike neglected. Niel broke off a fine branch of the latter to decorate my table. It brought fresh to my memory a scene endeared by all the nameless ties of childish happiness. Dear, dear Kilderry! A home where I was loved and cherished as one of the family, and where in after years, when the parent stems were stripped of their best and brightest blossoms, I returned and, I trust, was enabled to soothe, at least to sympathise in, the grief of the survivors. . . . There I could enjoy in perfection my long unconstrained rambles among the hills, or along the banks of Lough Foyle. . . . Above all other places, the deserted flower-garden of my first and dearest friend was almost sacred to my heart. In early childhood I had assisted her in forming it. Almost every shrub and flower had been planted by our hands alone, for it was a spot she delighted in. . . . She had with great care cultivated a slip of pomegranate, and from the time Henry went to India, perhaps from association of ideas with its Eastern extraction, we watched it with peculiar interest. When I visited that

garden for the last time the evening before I left Kilderry, the tree was covered with the most brilliant flowers, flourishing beyond any I had before seen. But where was she, so loved in life and lamented in death?

‘Alas! the cheek where beauty glowed,
The heart where goodness overflowed,
A clod, amidst the valley lies—
And dust to dust the mourner cries!’

My dear, dear Eliza! Her pomegranate, though a stranger to the soil, was bursting into beauty beside the lilac and hawthorn, its native children. How different *this* seemed to-day, shadowed by the gigantic leaves of the cocoa-nut, palmira, or plantain. I could not all day conquer the feeling of depression this had created, nor recover my spirits until we went on shore in the evening, and passed through some very pretty Indian scenery. For the first time I saw open and cultivated fields; hitherto there had been nothing but impenetrable jungle.

We walked faster than the progress of our boat, and feeling rather weary, I sat down at a point convenient for getting on board and under a prodigious banyan tree. I cannot wonder that in a country where the fierce rays of the sun dry up the earth, the luxuriant shelter of these trees should become a venerated object. Beneath, you are certain to see diminutive pagodas of wretched design and workmanship (as yet I have seen nothing of this sort worth mentioning). I stood by this magnificent tree waiting the approach of our boat, and at a little distance from those rude shrines of heathen worship I saw an object so much resembling an European tomb that I went to examine, and found my conjecture true. Encompassed by an iron railing, a lonely cenotaph had been erected to the ‘Memory of Major James Moore, who died in the 34th year of his age,’ with a further statement of his gallant actions. . . .

Oh! how I blessed God I was not by kindred or by friendship connected with the object of my reflection. Yet it was a case which came so closely home to my own heart, I could not long support it with composure, for he was doubtless as dear to some sorrowing friend or relation as my husband or my brothers are to me. I could not see for the first time, without emotion, the grave of a Christian surrounded by all the emblems of pagan idolatry. I *knew* it was immaterial which his dust mingled with, that of India or England, the voice of the Archangel could as easily penetrate *that* as any other tomb, and at the moment I could have knelt in gratitude to Heaven for that assurance which has taken the bitterness from Death — ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though worms destroy *this* body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.’

Almost opposite was Barrackpore, the country residence of the Governor. There is nothing worthy of attention about the place; there is a kind of ferry-boat there which a large party were just approaching, and our boat being at the ghaut, we embarked with all expedition to leave the landing-place clear. My little room looked so nice—my tea-table laid in the nice way the Indian servants arrange it, my lamp lit and one or two windows lifted up where the silvery moonlight fell. I sat down there, just having walked enough to feel rest pleasant; the air was bracing but not cold, the shore on either side presented such a sweet picture of repose. Niel sat down with apparently the same sensations; after a pause he exclaimed ‘We only want James with us, and Catherine, to know how happy we are.’

Next morning about six we reached Chinsurah; it seems of some extent; was formerly in the possession of the Dutch; indeed I believe there is a sort of title as governor in the

hands of some old Mynheer yet, but this did not concern us. It is likely to be a place of some importance as a dépôt for Europeans; barracks are building to accommodate a large number of men. There is a Commandant and staff here, and I am told Colonel Tidy is a most gentlemanlike and courteous person; he has already shown Campbell every attention, and knows something of my brother George, whom he eulogises very highly. One or two boats had already taken up their position there, and we selected ours beside the pinnacle of Captain Macdonald of the 38th, who Niel vehemently declared must be an especial ally of mine from being a true Highlander. With him was associated as a travelling companion a Mr. Everard of the 11th Lancers, both regiments being stationed at Cawnpore; the latter Niel termed a perfect pattern of an English gentleman; there were others of whom I shall presently speak.

We established our boat exactly under the Commandant's house, the garden and trees above forming an agreeable shade. We had not been many minutes there when Colonel Tidy sent his bearer with his bote salame, to say that breakfast was ready, but as we were sitting at our own we of course declined.

After breakfast Niel went into the Commandant's house, which is a large and pleasant building of two stories, with bow windows, and verandahs all round, overhanging the water. I am told that during the rains the river has paid an unwelcome visit into the lower rooms. A number of military men were then domesticated there, among others Colonel Everard of the 13th, who was to take command of the fleet up the river, from whom we understood that some time yet might elapse before we were ready to depart. We were joined here by the assistant-surgeon of the 13th, with whom we both felt much pleased. The morning passed in receiving the visits

of the gentlemen, and after evening parade a numerous party prepared to walk, which I thought quite delightful to be enabled to do without losing caste, which would be the infallible consequence of such an act in Calcutta ; it was to me no small punishment to feel able and willing to walk, and still be confined to the use of a carriage. My favourite young friend, Maxwell of the 14th, came to dine with us. I heard he was on the bank and went out to speak to him. His first exclamation was, 'How well you look, how fat you are grown ; I should never know you to be the same person.' . . .

✓The appearance of Chinsurah is extremely cheerful and neat ; before many of the houses there are rows of tall trees ; I know not their name, but in the twilight they seem very like the English elm. There is a delightful shady walk just beside our ghaut ; at one end it terminates at the English church, the other at the Commandant's compound. There is a splendid house belonging to a native close to the church ; I would call it a palace, the verandahs in this country so much increase the apparent extent of the houses. The proprietor of this building is called Praw Kinson Holdar ; he professes to be a devout admirer of English people and habits, and gives splendid nautches. His house is furnished according to the Indian idea of European style, and I am told he is highly flattered when the military visit him, which Niel intends doing, and says I must be of the party, to which I have no objection.)

7th January.—To-day I had a visit from some ladies of the garrison, which is rather an event ; my future companions are not likely often to be females ; Mrs. Sieveright and Mrs. Clarke, the ladies of the staff-surgeon and paymaster, found their way to my boat in defiance of the mid-day sun. Mrs. Clarke (in right of seniority I mention her first, though very few ladies

are inclined to profit by any privileges annexed to this distinction), has been many years in India on the Bombay side, and seems a good soul, with a fair proportion of talk. Mrs. S. is obviously a well-educated young woman; she may be called accomplished too, from her taste and talent in drawing. She is Scotch without *much* of the Doric accent, a cousin of our assistant-surgeon's.

(In the evening, being quite alone, we went to walk, and took the resolution of exploring the town. The part that may yet be called Dutch exhibits pictures of ruin and melancholy beyond anything you can imagine.) The plantain trees had risen so luxuriantly wherever there was sufficient space, that until you call to mind the rapidity of their growth, you are inclined to think that very many years must have passed away since these dreary habitations were the cheerful abode of man. The space between the houses is so very narrow that two persons only can walk together. These lanes, which we cannot call streets, though they answer the same end, in such a climate must be deadly, preventing any circulation of air; the heavy, moist leaves of the cocoa and plantain increase the evil, so that it is wonderful indeed how they escape pestilential complaints. I fancied it dangerous to walk through them when we did; but what must the rainy season be, when the air is dense with vapour? From many of the houses the frame-work had fallen in, so that through the windows you might see some of them had once been beautifully finished with carving and mosaic work.

(The evening became so rapidly dark, I would willingly have taken my departure from this city of silence and decay, but from the intricacy of the streets, we completely forgot the turn that led us in, and wandered back and forward without effecting our purpose. Our utter ignorance of the language

deprived us of any assistance from the gloomy inhabitants, who occasionally passed us by—so noiseless and wrapt up in such a manner that you only see their glaring eyes, they were no bad similitudes of spectres, as far as we know of their form and fashion.} Though I am tolerably free from ladylike terrors, I began to wish devoutly we were away. I did not know whether the ruling passion of avarice ever tempted them on to murder, and I felt truly delighted when a sudden opening which we had frequently passed by led us to a flight of steps descending to the river and just in the rear of Praw Kinson Holdar's splendid house. As we paused to breathe before it, it would be difficult to believe the contiguous ruin from which we had emerged.

(And then it was so cheerful to regain our boat, where all our servants sat smoking their hookahs on the bank awaiting our return, in their neat white dresses and scarlet turbans and cummerbunds, with a chair prepared to carry Mem Sahib into the boat, as the tide had retreated. The interior of my budgerow is truly comfortable, with the clear, bright lamp over the tea-table and the scarlet curtains at this season closely drawn over the window or gilmils/

I mention all these little things, as they will enable you better to follow me in your mind's eye. At present I cannot understand the nature of that weariness which most Europeans are haunted with. My heart never before felt so light.

10th *January*.—What a delightful walk we had this morning along the bank of the river! Having dressed by lamp-light, we were out in time to enjoy all the beauty of daybreak, and I did not find a cloth pelisse too warm. I suppose after a time *that* weariness bequeathed by Solomon to all under the sun will take possession of me too; in the meantime I do so much admire the rich vegetation, the gigantic palms, the date,

the plantain, and the wilderness of creepers which climb and bind them in one mass of luxuriant green. Often are they thus grouped beside a tank of clear water . . . I saw an exquisite humming-bird, about the size of a large bee, sitting in the white cup of the datura. If Hogg had seen this he would have written a volume on the retreat of the Fairy Queen.

On our way home we met Captain Macdonald, who returned to breakfast with us, and had a long colloquy on the Highlands and connections of Niel's known to both. I can enter into the feeling of clanship, though many count it folly and weariness; it interests me, and this ally of Niel's seems good nature itself, and most actively kind and obliging. He has taken the correction of my domestic affairs into his hands, which is a regular act of charity, as you may suppose with such a host of servants, and utterly ignorant of their language and habits, how much I am imposed on.

There is a large addition already to our party and fleet. I saw two budgerows pass mine with ladies and children, but they were of that unfortunate complexion which marked the native extraction. It seems to me very strange the prejudice existing here against half-castes; formerly when European ladies were rarely met with, they held a place in society which they have now entirely lost. The different estimation in which the native servants hold *them* and *us* is quite surprising. As yet I know nothing of them myself, it is from hearing Niel and the officers of our party speak of them that I judge; I am the only *fair* lady in the fleet, and my tea-table has become a nightly rendezvous. Some of the young men are extremely pleasing and gentlemanlike, and no one can get on better than myself without female society. I can just now fancy the look of reproach *you used* to wear when I said this, and repeating it here will but prove my incorrigible nature.

There is *much* I *could* tell you in defence of my argument, but I will only at present say, that unless I can make an especial selection of my female associates I should rather be without them. It has so often fallen to my lot to witness and severely experience the delightful feuds with which womankind contrive to animate society, that it is with fear and trembling I find myself within the mystic influence of a circle of petticoats; indeed so many months have passed since I have been excluded from that felicity, I almost forget I belong to the sex *possessing* and *requiring* so many privileges. However, as *this* was of old debateable land between us, I will politely relinquish it and take you, if agreeable, to visit the residence of Praw Kinson Holdar, which was certainly very curious to an English eye.

Captain Macdonald sent to him to say, a lady intended to visit there, and he returned his bote salame to entreat the honour of her presence.

The lower apartments of these large houses here are extremely dirty, as they are generally filled with lumber, palkees, water goglets, slippers, hookahs, and a lazy chokadar in keeping of the place, like a dog on his mat. You ascend to a suite of spacious reception and dining-rooms, furnished with damask satin couches and low ottomans, brilliant with crystal lustre and beautifully painted wall-shades, which when lit up must doubtless have an extremely good effect. There were some fine paintings, and mixed with these in true Hindoostanee taste, wretched daubs of water-coloured drawings, like a child's first attempt. Various punkahs covered with crimson silk and fringed with gold met your view in every direction.

Off these were what they termed *sleeping rooms*, which never *had been* slept in and *never were to be* so appropriated. It made my head ache even to look on the little stiff pillows

stuffed with cocoa-nut; indeed the whole aspect of these rooms was enough to murder sleep. They give you such an idea of the utter absence of comfort. Vast and lonely the chairs and tables all looked, as if growing out of the floor. But what especially delighted me was a small room which Praw Kinson, in the innocence of his heart, called a reading-room. It contained a writing-table whereon lay an edition of Murray's *Reader* perforated by the ants, and an old newspaper and an *Annual Register*. Only fancy his idea of an English library! I don't think Dominie Sampson would have delighted much in the office of librarian to the Eastern nobleman. There was, however, little to interest me after the first glance, and I was impatient to be gone, as I found it fatiguing to stroll about these long apartments in the heat of the day. Our turbaned host, with many salaams, declared if I could prolong my stay till next month he would give a nautch for my divertisement.)

There still remained to be seen the zenana, or women's house, which was separated from the one we were leaving; this I put off visiting for another day. It [the house] also contains a sort of place of devotion, or shrine for their pagan worship, which a few evenings after I saw to great advantage by moonlight. A large square, surrounded by beautiful arches, one row above another supported by pillars of white Chunnan, so *purely* white I had never before seen anything which fixed my attention for the moment so much. There were only two objects to divide it, the simple and chaste effect of the interior surrounding me and the intense blue of the moonlight heaven above, as if neither sin or sorrow lay beneath the stars which, in enduring brightness, had looked down when the spot on which it stood was thick jungle, the lair of the tiger and the deadly serpent, and will shine as brilliantly over its ruin when one stone shall not remain upon another!

There are several very large and handsome houses occupied by natives, who seem, from all I can learn, to be an abject and contemptible race; even their wealth seems to contribute as little to *their own* gratification as that of *any other* person, nor can I hear of any pursuit they have more intellectual than smoking a hookah, with an occasional nautch given to all who choose to admire their finery. They generally are such huge, overgrown creatures, and seem as if their time was equally divided between sleeping and eating mountains of rice and ghee (Anglicè, butter turned to oil).

I must not forget to tell you that the result of my visit to the harem was not very satisfactory, as a severe-looking old dame appeared, to apologise for the non-appearance of the ladies, as they were going either to bathe or to pray—one ceremony, I believe, does for both.

13th January.—Still lying beneath the Colonel's garden, from which I suppose we shall depart in two or three days. I like Chinsurah so much, I should be sorry to quit it, were it not for that insatiable desire to look upon new scenery which is a part of me. There is a very large party now here. I saw, on my return home last night, a Captain Hemming, of the 44th, landing; he was accompanied by his wife, 'a dark ladye.' Niel knew him in Scotland, and I have got a hint they are coming to visit me, so I shall, after all I have said, have a female acquaintance, which I did not expect until I reached Dinapore. I very much like our assistant-surgeon, Dr. Brodie; he is very well informed and conversant in modern literature, with an infinity of odd ideas and quaint observation. What a pity it is so few people are original!—they are generally schooled and lectured and fashioned by some established rule or opinion till little or nought remains of that which nature made them to be. Well, if I ever have a child to teach, it

shall be what it likes to be until I find out its natural bent or predisposition.

One of our amusements is to dine at three o'clock, and be ready about four to take a dinghy boat and cross to the opposite bank of the river, which looks as picturesque as scenes at a distance generally do. It is such felicity to Niel to carry his gun as of yore, though the birds he shoots are more for ornament than use, and I am collecting their feathers very carefully, though I do not well know for what purpose,—I have some vague idea of sending them to my old friends and allies, the anglers who trouble the pastoral waters of the Bann!

The doctor is our companion, or *mine* rather, while Niel is searching the jungle, and a very pleasant associate he is to my taste, for while we canvass all subjects and persons, he has no more idea of paying me a compliment than if I were his grandmother.

How much I was entertained by the conversation of a native while we sat on the steps of a mosque waiting for Niel. He addressed us in tolerable English as to sound, whatever it may have been as to sense, for the opening of his discourse was bidding us 'good morning,' while it was good and true moonlight. He proceeded to inform us he was a 'very good Christian,' which attracted my attention, and in reply to my further interrogations he said he had read the Bible 'which was a very pretty book written by Lindley Murray, containing true stories,' of which he chiefly admired Noah making a ship and putting all the things into it. But of the real meaning or spirit of the book he had as much idea as one of the dead birds he carried home. And *this* was one of the converted Hindoos you read so much of in England; therefore I do beseech you to consider whether your money and attention

may not be better bestowed at home. It reminded me of one day at Lake-view,—when my dear and excellent aunt Angel had been deploring the state of the Jews, and entreating me to lay it to heart,—proposing a walk on a Sunday, and taking her into a field where about fifty wretched children and men were playing football in rags, dirt, hunger, and degradation. A great proportion of them could not speak English, and were in a state of misery which none but those who have travelled through Connaught can conceive. The inference was too obvious to escape my dear aunt's sensitive and benevolent heart, and required no comment.

18th January.—*Santipore* (20 miles above Chinsurah).—On the 16th we left Chinsurah, that is to say, took up our respective positions for sailing, or tracking, as it might be, next morning. There is not much novelty, or in fact anything worthy of observation until you leave the Hoogly and enter the Ganges. The first village or settlement is Santipore, where there is a manufactory of white and coloured muslins, very pretty.

Captain Macdonald and Mr. Everard came to breakfast in our budgerow and spent the day for the purpose of going out early in the evening to shoot. Mr. Everard, who seems to relish a gun about as much as myself, stayed with me while the others traversed the paddy fields in search of snipe. We often seated ourselves to rest and watch the progress of the fleet in the rear, as we had far outwalked the boats. I filled my handkerchief with those pretty scarlet and black berries of which children at home wear necklaces.

At a short distance from where we thus sat, I saw a fire, and, having some curiosity to see what the natives were doing round it, I went there, but fancy my horror and disgust when

I found they were burning an *old man*, whose son, with the most perfect indifference, was occasionally stirring up the embers. I can hardly say which, my eyes or my nose, suffered most. The effluvia was intolerable. With one consent both Everard and myself ran as fast as I, with the assistance of his arm, could get over the ground. Most quickly did our curiosity subside, and when we recovered breath to speak, he said: 'If I should live to return I am quite resolved to mention none of these things, for who in England would believe it?' Though I do not intend to imitate his prudence where you are in question, the justice of the remark struck me.

I do not wonder that so many people feel an interest in India, independent of its being the abode of dear relatives, when I reflect on the impressions produced in early life by the reference to Oriental habits and scenery in the Bible. The first ideas of a child are thus directed to the East; whether we think of Jacob journeying to keep the flocks of Laban, or David leaving his sheep to lead the armies of Israel! With all those exquisite pictures of pastoral life, and allegorical sketches which interest the young imagination, add the wild magnificence of the Persian and Arabian tales! all combine to excite curiosity; at least they did mine. I do think since I was six years old my mind has been teeming with fancies connected with this country, and the course of reading I afterwards adopted served to strengthen them.

About the 20th of January we entered the Jellingy [Jalangi], a branch of the Ganges which at this season is navigable, but not later. After ten or twelve days we shall again re-enter the Ganges, and do not after leave it. At present I like the change, as I now have the prospect on each side, which in the mighty stream we have left is not the case.

‘Well, and pray what *do* you see?’ said one to whom I made this observation, who had made so many voyages on the river that he had no excitement of novelty to animate his imagination.

‘See! why I see that magnificent banana tree, whose top-most bough the first level ray of sunshine is tinging with crimson and gold, and those two men weaving muslin under its shade, then that group of bamboo huts behind, where some are nearly covered with blue and lilac creepers, and those beautiful, young, slender arecas rising like arrows behind them, not to speak of that cluster of palm and toddy-tree there, where that flock of buffaloes are grazing. (Look at that party of women coming over the bank with those classical-shaped water-pots on their heads. See what graceful figures in their own peculiar costume, how elegantly they walk.) What Englishwoman could descend through that broken ground with such antelope steps? (Then see that immense elephant crossing the river with his rider waving that slender branch which is enough to guide him. Look at the fishing-boats just ahead of the budgerow and the mutchlee wallah standing to offer us the produce of his labour; then that row of tamarind trees on the opposite bank, almost white with pigeons, and through an opening of their branches see that pagoda in the distance—see the buckree-wallah taking home that herd of goats and kids, and look at my khaunsamah speeding toward them to bargain for some kids. . . . On the right what a row of shady trees, planted as regularly as if they formed one side of an avenue at Blenheim, and as it is now cool enough to get out, pray command the attendance of the dinghy boat to put me on shore, as I am resolved to walk to the extreme end of that row of trees, unless they reach three miles.’

There is a station here, Kishnaghar, at which we stopped for

a day. On such occasions it is rather curious to see the chief person of the bazaar or village coming with a present of fowl or fruit or vegetables to the commanding officer to procure his protection, or restraint of the depredations of the soldiers. There is here an indigo factory of some importance, and on such occasions as a fleet stopping, the planters contribute all they think may be acceptable, such as fruit, vegetables, or bread. At these remote stations an interchange of civilities is generally sought on both sides. Those who live in the solitude of these factories are glad to meet persons from the Presidency.

On the 7th of February we arrived at Rajemahl, having had the hills in sight for some days before, the first I had seen since I left Scotland. To those born among mountains, there can exist no beauty where they are not; no convenience or fertility can compensate. Perhaps it is one of my many prejudices that their inhabitants too are more brave and virtuous than those elsewhere. I *must* hold them, however depressed by poverty, superior to the manufacturer or artisan, whose habits and vocation confine him to a town. Byron, speaking of such, expressed himself thus—

‘Here where no arts corrupt or civilise,’

and proceeds as the warm eulogist of mountains. . . .

Setting both poetry and prejudice out of the question, I do not believe any one could look on the ever-varying outline of the Rajemahl hills without being impressed with a sense of their beauty; and it was amusing too, to observe how the individual of each nation, as the change of position altered their character, found something to remind him of his native scenery. They were successfully compared to the West Highlands, the North Highlands, the Grampians, while *I* did very often fancy an accurate resemblance to the mountains

of Mourne and precisely such a wooded point as that on which Rosstrevor stands, which was once such a dear and favourite spot with me. My eyes grew dim at the throng of sudden associations that stood like visions around me. What a happy party of relations and friends I made one of there ! Of those united then 'into one knot of happiness' the chief part are scattered over the world, pursuing separately the journey of life ; to some of them thorny indeed has been its path. The rest and the better part have been removed from a participation of its ills, . . . and the death of the last is too recent to be thought of without emotion, the distinguished and gallant Colonel Edwards of the 14th, who died at Bhurtpore. . . .

The spot we were now approaching was not only rendered interesting by its own natural beauty and its associations of sentiment and memory, but was also remarkable in having been the favourite residence of the Rajah of Bengal. The ruins of a palace of considerable extent were still visible and visitable, as far as you could judge from the trees having risen so fast in the interior, and also the Ganges having undermined the bank in front, so that a great proportion of the building had fallen into the stream,—which was thereby rendered both difficult and dangerous to pass, vast masses of stucco and brick lying at regular intervals in every position.

I was so impatient to get on shore that I stopped the boat long before we reached the regular halting-place, as the difficult navigation of the river here made the progress slow. Still with my utmost exertion in walking we could not reach the ruin before twilight 'spread thick its dubious veil' ; though a brilliant moon added to its picturesque effect, the deep shade cast by the trees rendered it impossible for me to see what the original extent or proportions of the building must have been. Some parts were roofless, others in tolerable preservation with

a few articles of mouldering furniture. I entered one beautiful portico, overhanging the river, with pillars of black marble, the floors formed of mosaic. This seemed to me designed for a summer residence, as the apartments seemed too few in number and limited in dimensions to suit the Eastern idea of a commodious dwelling.

At a little distance stood a mass of ruin, of very many apartments. In some of these, as if in mockery of man, there grew in luxuriant beauty the coca and palmira trees, whose light and feathery leaves just surmounted the walls. . . . The mosque which we now entered through a mouldering gateway was indeed a beautiful edifice. . . . The dark and lonely building echoed our steps, and if I had had time to be afraid I might have recollected that its desolate interior was a fitting haunt for snakes. But when I am eager in any pursuit, I have a happy indifference to both real and imaginary fears.

Even by the imperfect light I could distinguish the remains of baths and aqueducts, and in the centre of a tower very similar to those which puzzle the antiquarians at home there grew a banyan tree whose lateral boughs spread so wide above the walls that it told how many years must have passed since when it waved in the breeze, a stripling bough.

By this time I found that my dress was more than half torn to pieces by the low, thorny bushes and the haste with which I was forced to make my way, and being now thoroughly weary, I sat down to breathe in one of these desolate chambers, and for the first time to listen to the note of the bulbul on a cedar bough above my head, now the only dweller in the fallen habitation of the tyrant and the slave.

It would be impossible to convey to any one who has never been in the tropical climate the beauty, the luxury of such a scene; at such an hour, the air becomes so pure and balmy,

the atmosphere so highly rarefied, the moon and stars shine with a brilliancy unknown in our hemisphere. The most slender leaf seen between you and the deep blue sky is accurately defined; the waving boughs of the coca that seem at intervals to stir from some internal impulse are so beautifully contrasted with the thick foliage of the mango, glossy as the holly tree. The hum of grasshoppers is ceaseless, and the banyan trees are white with doves whose soft note is perpetually heard.

Immediately below the spot on which I had taken up my position, I saw a few monuments apparently; the scene was appropriate, and they shone so purely white in the moonbeams, I went down to view them nearer. How strangely did it operate on my feelings to read there an inscription in English, to the memory of a lady, the wife of a British officer. She died on the river, returning from Calcutta where she had gone to send her children to England. Long, long ere they reached their destination her anxiety for them had for ever ceased. I cannot tell you how this little incident damped my spirits, for trite as the lesson may be, that death, equally certain and sudden in its summons, was no respecter of persons, still at that place and moment I was not prepared to meet its evidence, and it was strange, too, to mark the loss of an individual, standing on a spot which gave proof of the extinction of a king and a whole race whose names only remain. However, with them I could not identify myself, but again and again I thought of the mother who knew not the separation was eternal, and may perhaps have been solacing her solitary journey with the visions of a future re-union with those from whom the shadowy portals of the grave had for ever divided her. Yes, life is indeed a dream, and I am musing it away as all those have done whose relics lie around me. . . .

At a little distance there was another and a more lovely tomb, with this inscription only :

‘To the memory of Rose.’

Poor Rose! I fear you were the child of misfortune and perhaps of error; a husband would have spoken of his wife, a father of his daughter, a brother of his sister, but you are acknowledged by none, and may have been happily removed to a world and tribunal more merciful than the one you have left.

I suddenly felt my spirits ebb away in a manner they very frequently do, and a kind of indefinable foreboding oppress me. There was, in the solemn radiance of the night, a saddening influence. I lost all ardour for further discovery and for the moment time and eternity seemed blended into one.

I feel still as if I should never weary of the aspect of nature in her luxuriant tropical garb; as we glide so pleasantly on, the variegated outline of these hills, skirted with bamboo huts and enclosures of rice, but generally crowned with a prodigious banyan tree, seem so sweet and peaceful;—I long to stop the budgerow and wander along the bank, the groups of elegant bamboo and palmira trees, combine to produce such agreeable images. . . . The spaces between these verdant hills were as rich in fields of flax in full bloom as those—

‘Of mine own native Isle of the Ocean.’

while . . . a mosque or pagoda brought to your mind that even time, whose power has swept away kings, nations, even portions of the earth, has no sway over the fixed and immutable religious (prejudice I was going to write) opinions of these people. Here where the kingly race of Timour had erected a fortress for security or pleasure, all that the wandering fakirs

can point to of the past is a print of the prophet's foot impressed in the stone, but I honestly confess my benighted eyes were blind to its evidences.

I was told that parties still come from the upper provinces and encamp here to hunt the rhinoceros and wild elephant, the surrounding hills being an impervious shelter for wild animals of all kinds, the woods, too, abounding with partridge and jungle cock. The river continues to wind closely at the foot of these beautiful hills, which though decreasing in height are still lovely in verdure and outline. The province of Behar, which we had just entered, is so much superior to that of Bengal, no traveller leaves the latter with regret; its dense masses of wood and sandy wastes (it being for the greater part alluvial soil) can bear no comparison with the hills and valleys which we now glided by.

10th February, *Pir-pointy*.—I had a long walk on the sand last night, attracted by the unusual objects of palkees, hackneys, horses, and crowds of travellers on foot, all hurrying to the annual fair or festival celebrated at this place. (I was assured the number which assemble there is not less than 100,000 and it is a fearful instance of the bonds with which superstition enthrals its victims. Here for years uncounted it has been the practice to sacrifice an infant and vast number of kids. The official authorities have interposed and sometimes do succeed in preventing this inhuman rite being exercised to its extent, but the number of kids floating about and their plaintive cries excited many painful ideas.)

There was one circumstance which staggered my credulity; there was here an Englishman, born and educated in a Christian land, who was become the wretched and degraded partaker in this heathen worship, a General S——, who has

for some years adopted the habits and religion, if religion it may be named, of these people; and he is generally believed to be in a sane mind, rather a man of ability; it makes you pause and in vain attempt to account for such delusion. Those whom it is the will of God to be born in darkness are not accountable, but that any who ever lived in the light of Christianity should voluntarily renounce its hope is truly awful!

We dined in the evening with Captain and Mrs. Hemming; they have invited me so often and made so many advances to be acquainted, it appeared quite surly to hang back. We met some of our own allies there, and spent a pleasant evening. Hemming had been over the most of Ireland and knew many of my family and acquaintances, and I need not remind you how much we relish anything connected with home or country when the tie is severed. She is a very kind and gentle little person, with one sweet little boy. Some one told me she had been rather a thoughtless girl, but from all I can judge, she seems fond of her husband, and devoted to the child; and she is now but eighteen,—would be in England only leaving the nursery. . . .

We have agreed to visit the hot wells at Monghir as we shall stay all the day at the station, and they will dine in my boat at three o'clock, that we may be out early and stay late. Besides there are five of the gentlemen to join the party, so I shall have quite a burra kaunna, and it is fortunate there is a good bazaar at Monghir. But, in fact, we are never at a loss, I have only to say after breakfast, 'Two, four, or six Sahibs are to dine. At this season we are well supplied with delicious salt humps, brisket and tongues, plenty of fowl, ducks, and guinea-hens in the cook-boat, fish in the river; every village affords kid, eggs, milk, butter, and bread; mutton and beef

we get from the commissariat store ; so that you can have, only by saying the word, an elegant dinner, most admirably dressed with superb curry and mulligatawny soup ; all sorts of confectionery my khaunsamah prides himself in displaying, and as your servants are responsible for everything, I have nothing to be troubled with, and there is something of gaiety and grace about these little parties which render them very agreeable. There is no such thing here as gentlemen sitting to drink and the ladies hiding to give them opportunity after a few glasses of wine.) We all get on shore impatient that any of the light should be lost, for that fades all too fast.

We have just passed a beautiful and curious cluster of rocks, which are here a very unusual object. They rise in the river to a very considerable height and on the summit is a fine mosque. Whole flights of doves are perched on the trees and shrubs, which have a pretty effect. Some mendicant Brahmins live on the rocks, and form not the least interesting part of the picture of the Colgon rocks.

11th February, Monghir.—We reached this station this morning, which is really a pretty place. There is a fine old fort and some neat houses ; this fort was built by the Sultan Sujah, and the place is now occupied by an invalid battalion. We were, however, disappointed in our design of visiting the hot springs as the boats had stopped so far above them, they were beyond a walk ; so we changed our route and went through the village and some beautiful topes of mango trees.

(I was pleased to find we were to remain two days, which gave me an opportunity of seeing the manufactures of the place. How beautifully they work in wood ! The chairs, tables, etc., which they carry down on their heads to the boats to induce you to buy are really curious, and to see these poor

things surrounding your boat, up to the waist in water, holding them up to excite your attention and obtain a preference, made me feel quite sad at their poverty. Others bring baskets of hats, bonnets and straw work, punkahs, mats; others guns, swords and all sorts of useful things. The arrival of these merchants at the appearance of a fleet is like a fair or market.)

The doctor was our only companion at dinner, and after it was over we set out on a long walk without just knowing where. We went off in the direction of the fort, but it is so difficult always to keep in mind the deceptive nature of the twilight here, that the rapid approach of night has more than once disagreeably surprised us. On this occasion we were seriously perplexed, having lost sight of the river, and before we had time to reflect, the darkness and intricacy of the ground and mouldering walls brought us up to a stand. I did not care for the matter, knowing we must find the river when the moon rose, and I could have passed the night as comfortably in the ruined fort as in my budgerow. All places where Campbell was with me were equal, but he was not so stoical, better knowing the danger of being exposed to the night air, and was in misery to get me safe on board. So we walked first in one direction, then in another, none of us knowing enough of the language to ask the way; still I was more amused than otherwise until I became so exhausted that I lay down on the ground. I thought them very cruel to insist on my getting up and crawling on between them, until again I would beg to rest. Some hours passed this way before the long wished for fires on the bank announced our return to the ghaut, where the poor weary dandies were prolonging the luxury of rice and curry and smoking over the embers. I actually could not speak from

fatigue, and gladly let them lift me into the boat, where I lay with my eyes shut till they made my tea.

14th February.—After leaving Monghir we had some very unpleasant weather and sailing. The current became very strong, and the difficulty of tracking against the stream and round some headlands was extreme, indeed it was frightfully dangerous. The hot winds were just commencing, and blowing against us with violence. We had to wind our way along tremendous banks, in many places so completely undermined that they gave way and fell with a crash like thunder. Two of the soldiers' boats a little ahead sunk just close to us.

Just as our cook-boat came alongside to give us dinner, a frightful mass of earth and trees fell all but over it and us, and only that Providence had willed we were to escape, I cannot tell how we were not sunk at the moment; the water had sunk so much, the distance from the top of the bank to the bed of the river was very great. The ropes broke and many boats drifted to the opposite shore, or down the stream, without any power of resistance, as the dandies were all on shore. I passed a day of extreme apprehension; the want of courage of the crew and impossibility of depending on them under such circumstances compelled Campbell to remain all day on deck in the burning wind and sun. I was in torture about him, but also knew that his presence *there* was necessary, for if any accident happens these cowardly people run off and leave you; indeed I am not sure but that it would be contrary to their religion to take you out of the water, as they account all such as have died there, objects of peculiar favour. Captain Macdonald and Mr. Everard had promised to dine with us, . . . but from the state of the bank found it impossible to descend where they intended, so had to walk miles on the bank before they

could get on board. Captain Macdonald's acquaintance with the language and people relieved me and rested Niel, who gave up his station on the top much fatigued, and after a little time we sat down to a late dinner. But I was quite unable to eat or be commonly civil to my kind friends. I felt a curious sensation creeping over me and went out after sunset to try and shake it off, but this I could not.

15th February.—I often say to myself 'What can be the matter with me?' I feel such oppressive and unwonted weariness. If I take a book I can hardly see; when we go out for a walk I find myself looking round for a tree to sit and rest me; if any one mentions England I become so low and nervous I would gladly weep. Niel has also been complaining, but this I expected, from his exposure to the sun for so many hours. He is, I can see, better to-night, though the air has been to-day as if coming through a furnace, and the hot sand penetrating the gilmils in every direction. The old Indians of the party say to-day is nothing in comparison of what will come. We were instructed to close all the windows, to keep *out* the heat, which I had thrown quite open, and since that the boat is pleasanter. My skin has such a strange feel, as if my hands were covered with parchment.

I have been trying to keep Niel quiet on the couch by reading to him *Kenilworth*, and, now that I see him better, could willingly go to bed myself.

III

FEBRUARY 25TH—APRIL 22ND, 1827

17th March, Dinapore.—I must now account to you for a wide chasm in my narrative, most truly an involuntary one. I am still so weak my hand trembles and the words I write are indistinct. Oh how miserably ill I have been! and this fever is like a serpent showing his crest among flowers; it came upon me when and where I least expected such a visitation. I believe I may date its commencement from my moonlight ramble among the ruins of Monghir, though I went about for some time, as my sensations were incomprehensible to myself, and tried to conquer the debility I felt creeping over me, as Niel watched me with looks of such extreme distress. I sat up until I hardly knew what was doing around me, then shivering fits of ague gave my illness a decided character, and Niel and the doctor began most anxiously to wish for our arrival, as the latter considered himself but imperfectly acquainted with the symptoms of the disease. All that care and kindness on his part could do, was done, and he only left our boat when obliged by duty.

Every one was so kind and attentive, I hardly knew which to be most grateful to. Captain Macdonald, who knew more of Indian fevers than any of the party, used to spend every evening in our boat, and make my drink and sit and talk by my couch when I could listen. The Hemmings too did

everything to assist us. But strength and life seemed receding; I could not always think, but when conscious of anything, it was that my earthly course was nearly run, and I often tried to prepare Niel's mind for this being the case. You will believe I did not find him a patient listener.

On the 25th of February we reached Dinapore. It was an interesting day for those blessed with health and spirits. The 13th had got up a masked ball, and it was the gayest exhibition that had been seen. Every one was to be there in the district. I heard all this talked of before we reached the cantonment, as they had sent to beg that the surgeon, Dr. Moatt, would come and meet me. Some others came with him to see Niel, and I could see what a favourite he was with all. . . .

We were just anchored beneath the bank when the evening gun fired; I cannot tell why at that moment it sounded like the knell of a funeral.

Dr. Brodie soon after came to see me before he made his appearance in the ball-room, of which he promised to bring me all the news in the morning. I tried to say 'Do so'; but it seemed so strange, the varied conditions of life: I was perhaps dying while they were thinking of dancing.

Niel's first idea on landing was to inquire for a woman whose industry and good conduct had interested him so much that he had tried his influence with Colonel McCreagh to get her permission to accompany the regiment though out of the regular order. Anne accordingly made her appearance in my boat and I had rarely seen one more prepossessing in the capacity of a nurse. She had been strongly recommended by Dr. Moatt. . . .

Under any other circumstances I could have been most heartily amused at her surprise and delight on finding who I

was; and strange it was that she had been born beside my father's house and left an orphan, when my mother had taken an interest in her welfare and had her placed with an old mantua-maker, whom I well remember coming with gowns to my mother. She shared the fate of most pretty country girls and married a soldier. Her conduct was so good that she was permitted many little indulgences, and on arriving in India was engaged as wet nurse for the infant of a wealthy civilian (who on such an occasion are always liberal); from this she was brought into notice and one of her children adopted by a lady who had none.

Her gratitude to Niel and affection for me was unbounded, and though she had just been confined she brought baby and ayah and all, determined to stay while she could serve me.

I ought to tell you that my own female attendant, whom I greatly liked, was occupied by the illness of her child and for some time had been unable to wait on me, so now being comfortable with so nice a creature as I had got, who had the voice, the step, and touch of a nurse, I was much relieved, as she knew perfectly how I should be treated and could prepare my drink and everything of food and medicine I required.

I shall not forget Niel's surprise when he returned to the boat and found Anne still in joyful ecstasy at her discovery of 'Miss Knox,' as he knew nothing of the link of clanship uniting us.

All nurses are privileged gossips, and Anne's anecdotes of the regiments sometimes amused and often made me sad. The ladies did not stand high in her estimation, and she boldly pronounced that there were no companions for *me* there. My expectations were not sanguine from what I had gathered at the depôt, in Calcutta, in Chinsurah, and

indeed wherever the corps had been, and I felt quite desponding at the thought of being identified with such. But that could only be in name or in idea; nothing could make it necessary to form intimacy where my judgment did not approve.

Next morning Niel was very active in getting my quarters put in order and the baggage removed into them; in this he received much kind assistance. The following day, with the aid of the doctor and nurse, I was dressed or rolled up in shawls and put into a palkee on deck. I was just conscious that they were removing me, but recollect little more, until I found myself watching the lizards as they ran up and down the walls of a large and pleasant room. The Hemmings, who were going off next day to Cawnpore, came to see me in the evening, and rather forgetting my debility sat a long time and talked of the ball and Niel's cousin and country-woman, Lady D'Oyly, who with a large party from Bankipore were there. . . .

After they took leave the doctor recommended my keeping quiet as I felt heated and restless, more than usual. But in the night, the fever increased so much that Niel sent for him. I need not conduct you through all the changes and sufferings I underwent. All I had ever read or imagined of thirst was faint in comparison of the reality. I quite shudder at the recollection of the avidity with which I used to watch a large jug which held my drink. The pains in my bones and joints became excruciating, and I used to shiver in the fits of ague till every joint ached again. Then, when the thirst was satisfied the hot fit came on, and actually the moisture ran in streams down my limbs. After this change I generally lay in a stupor for some hours, without either memory or suffering.

I used to feel Niel's hand on my forehead, or the faint pressure of his lips, and could just open my eyes and look at him. I cannot tell how, but I used to know when he was near me, though there was neither word nor sound.

The first change I felt was the intermission of the ague fit at the usual hour. This excited my hopes that it had left me; however, it had but changed, and returned every twenty-four instead of twelve hours. Gradually its duration lessened, and strange to say, I *felt worse* as the fever left me; dreadful palpitations attacked me, and I cannot suppose anything else so like death as what I then felt. I used to make Niel lift me up to enable me to breathe. The doctor then wished me to have as much change as the house afforded, and in the morning I was dressed and carried into my dressing-room, where I lay on my couch. My strength was so exhausted that I used to think this quite misery, and to tell the truth I became so fretful and low-spirited, nothing did, or could please me. At the same time I was so much ashamed of it, I was quite glad when Niel used to go to parade, that I might cry without distressing him.

Poor Anne used to talk of home and that made me quite hysterical. Then in despair she went to the doctor and begged him always to come in Campbell's absence, and thus time went on until I was able to go into the verandah in the evening where the air and sight of people riding and driving amused me. Yesterday I went to dine with Niel and the doctor at three o'clock, and much relished my curry, so now I may say I am well, though very weak, as I feel, from writing thus far.

17th March.—This morning after Niel gave me my coffee at five, he made me promise I would come to breakfast, saying he would help me to dress on his return. I felt very lazy, but

he urged it and reminded me it was Ogilby's birthday and so forth, so I promised to get up and bathe when he went out. On his return, after helping me to dress and placing a chair in the verandah where I could enjoy the pleasant air of the morning, he told me he had invited an old friend to breakfast, with whom he had been so many years intimate that he was anxious to make us acquainted, particularly as we lived in the next quarter. Though I felt nervous at the idea of meeting a stranger, as Niel seemed so much to wish it I could not object, but I looked at my dressing-gown, which appeal Niel replied to by saying, 'Never mind it, there is nothing I like you so much in as your dressing-gown, and Fenton is such a good fellow, you will not consider him as a stranger!'

He then told me there was a very fine young man lived with Fenton, a son of General Blackwell's, with whom he was sure I should be quite pleased, but that he did not ask him then as he thought I might not like to see two strangers, and Fenton, being his oldest friend left in the 13th, deserved a preference. While he spoke the person in question [Fenton] entered the verandah, and I perfectly recollected having seen him in Derry. He is a fine-looking man in figure and was then very handsome. He appears now in very delicate health, thin and languid, like one who had suffered. We got into conversation about Derry and Anne Maxwell, with whom he used to be a favourite partner at the assemblies. Niel was recommending him to follow his example and turn Benedict, which he expressed his willingness to do, only that India afforded little choice of European ladies and he would not marry a half-caste. He said he meant to apply for leave and return in search of health and a wife. I told him Anne Maxwell was still exhibiting her beauties at Bath with the addition to them of £1400, but this part of my advice Niel

condemned and said: 'If he only knew the happiness of marrying from love alone he never would barter such a blessing for anything that money could offer, but never fulfil.' From our united testimony of the happiness of a well-assorted marriage he declared himself more than ever inclined to follow our advice if it were practicable, but that we were in the meantime most enviable in his opinion.

We had a great deal of laughing on the subject and he promised to be a frequent visitor at my tea-table, as mess hours did not suit either his health or taste.

After Fenton was gone Niel made me lie down, while he went to read the papers, and he returned shortly after with Kershaw, whom I forgot to mention as one of our companions up the river and an old friend of Niel's in the Isle of Wight. He was in very delicate health, and had obtained leave to stop at Bankipore with Sir Charles D'Oyly, to whom his talent in drawing recommended him. He spoke of them as a most delightful family, Lady D'Oyly in particular, as lovely in appearance and so warm-hearted and unpretending, she captivated all who knew her.

They wished to be civil to us when I was able to visit, and Niel said after I was a little stronger he would go and call, which is the style here, the stranger making the first visit. Kershaw and Brodie stayed to dine, or tiffin rather, as three o'clock is the hour I find agrees best with me. After Kershaw went off Campbell went to parade and returned to tea, for which, for the first time, I stayed up,—that is, I lay on the couch while they sat and talked of everything and everybody.

Brodie told me I could not remain incognito to the ladies any longer, for though he had said with a solemn voice I must keep quiet, I had been seen on the verandah and therefore must expect visitors. To make a virtue of necessity, Niel

announced to Mrs. Sale that I was able to leave my room next day, and on the following one I had the pleasure of sitting to be stared at as the latest arrival from England, by all who had nothing else to do, and had very many offers of all those civilities which mean nothing. Among others, as our own buggy had not arrived, there were horses and gigs, offered us by many, and some really from friendly feelings. As Brodie and every one recommended my getting out to drive as the first means of restoring my strength, Niel told me he had accepted Blackwell's offer of driving me out that evening and asked him to dine with us, proposing to have a walk with the doctor while I was away.

Accordingly at tiffin they appeared, and as Niel's ideas of persons are so very similar to my own on all points, the appearance and manners of Blackwell were exactly in my view as they had been in his, most pleasing. Without being handsome in feature or striking in figure, there was a quiet and gentlemanly refinement in his language and manners, which at once showed me he had been brought up with persons of high caste. . . . During our drive some of his ideas and questions amused me much from their originality, and I saw there was more to be known when he would speak out.

We found Niel and Brodie standing waiting our return, and they were both in such high spirits, eager to tell me different things they had heard, and began to deal rather heavily with some of our fair ladies, so that I reproached them with scandal. I left them when the gun fired, having promised to rise early in the morning and have a walk by the riverside. I cannot omit telling you, that after being about two hours in bed, I felt so dreadfully hungry that there was no use in trying to forget it and go to sleep; so I got up in search of something to eat. However the servants were all gone but the bearers, who will

not touch your food. The khaunsamah had locked his almirah and taken the key, and the only thing I could set my hands on was a pine cheese and a tub of sugar candy; and forthwith attacked the former.

Next morning, when ready to go out, the same malady returned, and I besought Niel to go and look for some provisions. He met the kitmutgar just going to the bazaar, and obtained some bread and butter, with which I sallied forth in the morning twilight. After a few turns we used the privilege which Colonel Sale had given of entering his garden to rest, where I sat until nearly seven, and saw our bearer watching for us with a chatta at the ghaut, where we met Blackwell, and he returned to breakfast, wishing to arrange with Niel that they both should call on the D'Oyllys, and fixed their visit for next morning. After Niel and Blackwell went to the mess-room to read the papers, I had another levée of visitors, and after they had gone some of a different grade, two or three soldiers and their wives, all from the County Donegal; among them the son of an old servant of my father, whom I so well remember an idle boy!

I can hardly express to you the delight some of these poor souls felt, and the extraordinary observations and compliments, such as, 'That I was very like my sister, only not so well favoured,' again, 'That they should have recognised me in any place by the Knox forehead.'

In the evening I was telling this all over to Niel and Brodie, who said: 'Well, while I was visiting at Captain —, some good people who had been calling on you came in, and they were all giving their opinions of you, and agreed they found you a very different person from what they expected; it had been rumoured that you were a blue stocking of deep tinge; by others, that you were very reserved and eccentric; but that

the whole party voted you a pretty little person, and very lady-like and agreeable.'

Now I would not omit giving you this conversation for anything, as I am certain you will not be less astonished to hear of my being called 'agreeable' than I was myself. I leave you to judge how much I must be improved, if the picture be a just one. I always calculate on being disliked at first, and from this idea neglect all efforts to conciliate, a fact which even you cannot deny. But this I can also assure you of, that I believe I am greatly amended, since I have had so gentle and truly amiable a companion as Niel always near, for though the most distant approach to censure has *never* passed his lips, I see the errors of my own opinions by comparing them with his. With a person of a different mould, I should be still the same wayward and reserved being that many justly think me. But *now* there is nothing to call the harsh lines of my nature into play; so by lying dormant they may in time altogether disappear. Niel is such a favourite with every one, that I share in the benefit of this sentiment towards him, and experience kindness and attention, which in my own behalf I should never receive.

27th March.—It would only weary you if I were to proceed in the regular 'Clarissa Harlowe' style, and tell you day by day of all that passes, when of necessity each day must be so much alike! At the the same time, 'tis true that life in India differs so much from every other place, that many trifling things will interest you to hear, as much as they did me to see, for the first time; therefore I shall mention anything that strikes me, without regard of system or arrangement.

First, I will try to give you some idea of the *place* I reside in. You, I believe, my dear, will never see Dinapore, and at present I consider that no great loss. The cantonment is

situated in a wide sandy plain, interspersed with mango topes. The houses are built in squares, the centre grass, and round these is the fashionable evening drive. These buildings make a very good appearance from their regularity, and are really comfortable and spacious houses. On the side of the square where we live my neighbours are on one side Fenton and Blackwell, next the paymaster, Mr. Wright; on the other side is Captain Aitkin and Mr. Wilkinson. I occupy the centre; Colonel Sale commences the next range. The persons on the opposite side of the square are Captain Debnam, Mr. Sheling, whose brother I knew in Derry in the Engineer Corps, the Quartermaster Sheridan, whose daughter I met in Calcutta, married to the surgeon of the 89th, Henderson; next the adjutant Hutchins, who went out to the West Indies with Niel as his servant, and whose good conduct and ability has advanced him. He married in England a very respectable woman in his own class of life. They seem to feel much regard and gratitude to Niel for former kindness when they were in an humbler sphere. She came to Niel the day after my arrival to know in what way she could be of use to me, and I have since found her very clever and useful in giving me many instructions about housekeeping arrangements.

This is called a very gay station. There have been a succession of balls, parties, plays, since my arrival. For these I have little relish, and even if I had, the delicacy of my health would prevent my attending them. I have already quite as much society as I wish for, and I am *so happy*, so perfectly happy at home, I wish for nothing beyond what it affords. My greatest grief is that I must go out and visit among these censorious people; it is really quite frightful the party spirit and illiberality existing here. I am told such things as are hardly credible: character is martyred

without mercy, charity only a name, and the transactions of private life exaggerated and misrepresented.

It does surprise me beyond measure how the mind can become warped in this way, or what the structure of that mind can be that has pleasure only in the affairs of others, and rejects all the resources of taste and knowledge and self-improvement. Idleness may well be called the root of evil, and yet none of these people can be idle, for they have all families, and none of them affluent means.

I think if I had children I should know and care as little what the residents in the garden-range were about as I now do of the inhabitants of New Zealand.

This subject brings to recollection Niel's visit to Bankipore. Both he and Blackwell returned in raptures with Lady D'Oyly and her cousin Mrs. Smythe. The most complimentary thing Niel could imagine was that they were genuine Highlanders, with grandfathers removed as far back as Noah! Their house seems quite a school of arts: they have a good library, of which they are most liberal; Blackwell came back loaded with books which he is to divide with me. . . . He comes very often to us, being an equal favourite with Niel, and he says he is so happy to have a lady to talk to, and speaks with so much tenderness of his mother and sister that it gives me a favourable impression of his disposition. *That* was the first thing which interested my feelings for Niel, his love for his mother! and now when I do or say anything particularly delightful to him he says, 'That is just like my mother.'

While we were in Calcutta I had some correspondence with my cousin, Frank Gouldsbury, relative to paying him a visit on our way up the river. He wrote with much cordiality, and I really felt a sincere desire to see him and know his

wife, from the affection I felt for his family, and their anxious wishes to hear from me all those particulars which are so interesting to distant friends. However, on our arrival at Patna I was so dreadfully ill, all thought of visiting was laid aside, and Niel wrote to him in explanation of it. We heard in reply that he had just been appointed as judge and magistrate to the station of Maldah, near the Rajemahl Hills, and was on the point of removal to that station, where he hoped we would pay our promised visit on my recovery. I felt sorry at not meeting him, but my sanguine feelings had been a good deal quenched by finding that the lady was a half-caste, in fact, a natural daughter of Mr. E——'s. Of this we had not the *most remote idea*, and felt very unwilling to be the medium of conveying it to his family, knowing the surprise and disappointment they must feel who were so wrapped up in him. I was a little mortified, as I had not supposed I had a single connection in the country of that colour which seemed so unfashionable, and I begin to fear there must be some truth in a belief, which is so general, to their prejudice. Colonel Sale is most violent on the subject; he will not allow a soldier to marry a native woman, but laments he cannot prevent the officers *disgracing* themselves. There is only one half-caste lady in the 13th, and it is rumoured she is likely to leave it shortly; it is so far fortunate.

I now have the comfort of hearing very often from James; his letters are coming regularly. Dear James! He is indeed the most generous-minded of beings; but for this very cause we must not trespass on him, nor do I think at present there will be occasion for it. We are both very moderate, and from choice wish to live as privately as possible, so I hope will find no difficulty in living within our income; very many others do it, with large families too.

The real necessities of life are here abundant and easily procured, it is the superfluities that are a stumbling-block. I must, however, tell you that many things here are absolute necessities which at home are matters of taste or choice, such as carriages, servants, etc.

It is equally true that there is here a lamentable want of principle, for I call going in debt wittingly and knowingly to be nothing less. You never hear any one say, 'I must not buy *this*, or order *that*, for I cannot afford it'; people get all and everything they fancy or require, and let the future and ten per cent. pay the debt. There is one officer in the regiment who spends twice as much as the pay of a colonel, and nobody has any idea where he finds either money or credit. However, the times are for ever gone when people made a fortune in India. I think a prudent man can live and enjoy every comfort of life here; and a married man lives more economically than a single one. But this is *all* that is possible. The retinue of servants you are forced to keep is absurd, but one of the tyrannies of custom that cannot be remedied.

It was quite amusing to see the joy of my servants when I was able to come out again. One reason, perhaps, was that they found my nurse obliged them to render a much more strict detail of domestic expenditure than I knew how to do. They could not impose on her, being accustomed to attend the bazaar herself. The first day I ordered dinner myself the khaunsamah knelt down to kiss the skirt of my gown, saying, 'When Mem Sahib is sick we are all sick.'

7th April.—I am now quite strong, *well*, and *happy*; I even think I am growing fat, in defiance of hot winds and all other evils. These winds are certainly tremendous; what must it be for those who are exposed to them? Within doors, the

the air is far from unpleasant; at eight o'clock the windows and doors to windward are covered with mats of the cuscuss grass, which the bheesties keep constantly wet, which not only produces a current of cool air, but a very aromatic scent from the grass. The worst part of it is that as light is heat, you must exclude both! and your twilight is not clear enough for writing or work unless you possess some very well-situated window. I often go and sit in my bathing-room, which, from being in the rear and flagged with stone, is always cool though the window is open.

Being now quite settled, I will give you the detail of one day. I always go to bed at gun-fire, with the firm resolution of getting up at gun-fire in the morning, or before it, which resolve I keep in the proportion of three mornings out of five. But taking one on which I actually did arise, yesterday, for example—we made a great noise for our coffee, while I scrambled on some clothes and dipped my face in a chillumchee of cold water; in about five minutes we were out and taking our way to the river side. You must remember that it is still dark, and when I arrive there the clouds are just dispersing in the east and changing with the gently rising breeze into colours and tinges so various, no eye can fancy them but those who look upon an Eastern sunrise. They have lifted themselves off the mighty Himalayas, crowned with everlasting snow. Oh, how beautiful is such a morning!

The banks of the river are thronging with the Hindoos coming to perform their morning devotions, consisting chiefly of the various ceremonies of bathing.

Presently you see the dobees or washermen coming along the bank, with their donkeys loaded with clothes, and commencing

their occupation, the fashion and process thereof producing a mournful sympathy for the welfare of your English garments, which these worthies seem to have peculiar delight to wring and beat to the uttermost. They have boards laid against the bank; on this they beat the article, be it linen, lace, or muslin, accompanying each stroke with the word 'Europe'!

The buckree-wallah creeps along with his goats; the native women, with their brass and earthen pots on their heads, are descending the ghaut for water. The half-naked coolies are trotting by with baskets of grain and vegetables on their heads. The native boats, canoes or budgerows, are loosing from the bank where they had brought up the night before, and are either sailing down the stream or tracking against it. There is a tonjin with a nurse and a pallid European child, with a retinue of bearers attending it.

Then comes up the mutchlee-wallah from his dinghy with fresh fish, and the kitmutgar or the mussolgee is bartering with him for it.

The glorious sun is now above the horizon, the summit of that mosque seems burnished gold, and the tops of the tamarinds beside it have caught the bright effulgence. By the way, it is difficult to describe such a morning in downright prose, unless it were that of Walter Scott's novels or Mrs. Shelley's *Valperga*.

Well, it is time to wend our way homeward, and we loiter across the parade ground. It is half-past six; I lie and rest on my couch till seven, then bathe, while Niel dresses and is ready to help me. He reads the Bible to me while I conclude my toilet.

This occupies about half-an hour more, and then, both dressed, our chairs are placed before the door or now inside

the verandah, and we walk either outside or within, till the bugle blows at eight. Then comes the bearer with gurrampanee, and in a few minutes after the kitmutgars with fish, rice, eggs, cold meat, fruit, preserves, curry.

Niel, like all Highlanders, enjoys a social breakfast, and we rarely sit down alone. There is generally some one like ourselves loitering in the shade before our house, on the front of which the sun does not fall till eleven o'clock, and there are a few intimate enough to come in at any time.

Breakfast is a long business, for generally some visitors come in before its conclusion and this protracts it. Then Niel goes and reads the papers, and I order dinner and settle the bazaar account, then put my almiras and drawers in order, as I have no native attendant, and hope I never shall. Some of my regimental *protégées* are always happy to be allowed to render any occasional assistance I require, and it is only a recreation and little variety to them to come over in the cool of the morning. Here they have nothing to do, having all native servants likewise, unless it is a very little needle-work.

About eleven o'clock Niel returns, and as the time of visiting is past I put on my dressing-gown and lie on the couch while he reads, or if I do not find the heat oppressive I work, and we walk about the verandah laughing, singing, and talking till about half-past two, when we prepare for dinner. . . .

Five is the parade hour, and during that time horses and carriages are collecting at each door for the drive immediately after. Short indeed is the daylight, and I am always waiting dressed at the door, that not a moment may be lost. You see the bearers flying to meet their masters and relieve them of the swords. After the oppressive heat of the day it

is so delightful to get out, and every one seems so heartily to enjoy it, as you meet passing and repassing.

As Blackwell's buggy is always in attendance upon me, Niel generally rides beside us, and almost always some one escapes from seven o'clock dinner and returns to tea, which our khaunsamah takes care shall be abundantly supplied. Those that dine so early generally like the addition of cold meat or puddings at that hour. I used to suppose people *never eat* in India, but I never remember at any time feeling so much appetite as I do now, and you may remember at home how little food I took.

How very pleasant these evenings are to me, and how I enjoy them; there is no one with whom I feel any restraint, and we have always so much mirth or agreeable conversation. I go to bed with reluctance, but always *do* go at gun-fire, so tired that I never waken till the bearer's monotonous 'Sahib' at the door announces another day.

I have been making a long deferred round of visits. Oh! it is heavy work, with *one* exception. I went to return the call of a lady I had met by accident during a morning visit at Calcutta. I was greatly prepossessed by her appearance, without knowing that she was a resident at Dinapore, or even her name. After a short residence in India you imperceptibly adopt the native idea that fairness and beauty are inseparable. I am told when a baby is born among the high caste natives they compliment it with the panegyric of 'being fair,' which they consider is a sign of noble extraction. To return from this digression—greatly was I pleased to see Mrs. Thompson's fair face and golden tresses issuing from a palkee in my verandah one of the first days I sat up. I spent an hour in her pretty bungalow overhanging the river, and felt all my favourable impressions strengthened.

Next I paid a visit to my next-door neighbour, Mrs. Wright, wife of our paymaster. She is that marvellous thing, an *old lady* in India, where, like dead birds, old ladies are never heard of or seen. She had a good deal to say for herself, and speaks of being the mother of a large family, nay a grandmother; as one who had experienced many of the vicissitudes of life, having spent many years in India, where every hour is marked with change. Yet is the good old lady not only cheerful but as merry as a grasshopper. I hope you will admire the *appropriate comparison* with a bulky old lady. She said, being so near we ought to be well acquainted, and regretted not having been aware of my illness in time to be useful to me, hoping that hereafter on any 'emergency' I would call on her. All this was kindly said, the only thing which I liked *not* was, she seemed fond of being *witty* with gentlemen, and it is such a treacherous weapon for a woman to hold, so apt to degenerate into the most unfeminine of all propensities—*double entendre*. This taste is, I am sorry to tell you, *regimental*, and is carried to an unqualified extent in the very quarter where you would expect peculiar circumspection as an example and precedent. I am utterly horrified at the things I hear of, and doubly anxious to keep as much aloof from intimacy as possible.

I have also seen a very beautiful woman, the wife of Major Denny; she is a native of the Isle of France, and speaks such pretty broken English. On a large scale, she is certainly a most attractive woman, and is, I am told, most amiable and domestic. I am sorry to find she lives at some distance, and is so devoted to her children she never quits them unless from necessity.

I am now writing extended on my couch, so tired after my

drive through this heated atmosphere. Niel had to go off to a court of inquiry, and I spend the hour of his absence in commune with you. It is *no trouble*, but a great pleasure to think that I am imparting to you all my thoughts, opinions, and actions, and that some day your bright eyes will rest upon *this very page*,—I only wish I knew *when!* and *where!*

Setting aside the natural and unconquerable yearning of the soul which all must strive with who have parted from loved and loving friends, and the sad conviction, arising from every day's experience, how many chances are against the chain of love ever being united again without some of its best links being missing,—*when* I can forget this, *I am happy!* and *do like India!* If I were asked what in my lot I would wish to change, I could say with truth, *Nothing!* *I am content!* I *fear* change, assured that *none* could *add* to my happiness, almost any might *take from it*. I might, indeed, wish to be nearer my brothers, but am willing to trust that some fortunate circumstance may bring *this* about. At the same time, I may add that I do not think under any circumstances in which I could be placed with Niel, I should be unhappy. There is something so perfectly amiable, tender, and refined in his conduct towards me, it would smooth the roughest path. Of course there may be wiser and better men, but it is impossible there could exist another whose tastes, feelings, and opinions are so consonant with mine; and, to say the least of my temper, it is very unequal, or, to speak plainly, I *should* say very irritable and capricious. Therefore it must be the superiority of his that softens mine, for it is equally true, we *never* have a difference, and he is fully persuaded I possess *the most amiable* of mortal dispositions. Before my marriage I certainly did *not* think highly of the state. We often talk together over that of our different acquaintances,

and conclude by being tenfold better pleased with each other from looking abroad.

My health is infinitely better than it has been for some years, and I hope and believe India will agree with me. When I have some knowledge of the language of the people I shall get on better, but even as it is, I have no reason to complain.

It is remarkable and grievous, too, the languor and gloom that gains ascendancy over many young people here, invading all classes of society, ages, and conditions of life; indeed I think the young are more frequently the victims of this malady than those advanced in life. Within the range of my limited acquaintance I know two very young men who have attempted to commit suicide from no other cause than weariness of themselves. There is a friend of mine who is a talented and amiable man: he often comes into my house and says, 'How thankful should I be now to die!' When I speak to him of the *duty* of living to amend ourselves and others, he will reply: 'Yes, it is both easy and well for you to reason, you have an exciting motive, *you* afford and receive happiness. But in the loneliness of my darkened habitation, where I am denied air and light, what recourse is left me but to turn gambler or brandy-drinker?'

I have no doubt it is in many cases the idea of being compelled to remain so many years that produces disgust. Were these young men told they might go when they chose, their dislike to the country would vanish, and it may be the feeling that I am not bound to India, but may with little difficulty return to England, which keeps my mind easy. Of this step, however, I have not even a distant idea, for Niel's dislike to the army is so great that the termination of all his wishes is

to quit it, but in the meantime he prefers it so much in India to what it is at home, I think that as long as he displays a red coat it will be here; indeed I cannot wonder if he does dislike a profession in which all his family have been singularly unfortunate. It is sad to think how many young and promising brothers have successively fallen victims to the climate. I do not fear for him, for a warm climate agrees with him from boyhood, and his very temperate habits and good constitution are all in his favour. We spend many an hour in talking over the distant period of return, and dream, as all *do* dream, of some 'home, from town and toils remote'; it matters little to him, in his country or mine; we have ties to both. Or even if we should find the sunny skies of France more congenial, that is comparatively home! Niel is so passionately fond of all sylvan amusements, place him beside a good river and he will find his own recreation, and the longest summer day is too short when he takes his gun. These occupations are to men what needlework is to women, and I think they keep them both in good health and good humour. However, I think such more becoming in the advance of life than its commencement, more as a rest after the business of the day. The man who has travelled, and mixed with various classes and conditions of men, is less likely to sink into rusticity. My impression of what is termed a country gentleman is not *very* dignified; perhaps I have not met favourable examples, for they have generally been shaded by a degree of narrowness of mind that wholly obscured any good qualities they might independently possess. The beau ideal of my fancy is an old soldier, but he *must* have been by birth and education a gentleman, and must be a general officer at last; the two or three whom I would single as pattern men out of the mass of their fellows were what I have described.

How much taste is changed since the days of Addison. Do you think you should ever have fallen in love with 'Will Honeycomb' or even 'Sir Roger de Coverley,' wig and all? Yet, they found ladies to their taste, and what strange productions *they* were. There is my lady Somebody in the *Guardian*, with *five* or *seven* unmarried daughters; no wonder, poor girls, as they are all supposed to be spouting the tragedy of *Cato* round the tea-table, which I opine that our grandfathers must have found rather indigestible.

There is certainly a curious change in manners and life in the present day. I should like to know if it be productive of more enjoyment. I read once an extract from the journal of a daughter of, I think, the Earl of Southampton, afterwards Queen of one of the Edwards: it was a sort of family diary. She describes rising at four in the morning and accompanying the maidens to milk the cows. On her return she, with her favourite attendant Dolly, caught Thump, the little pony, and rode a matter of ten miles without a saddle. At breakfast with her lady mother she observes the ale is sour, and another barrel must be broached before dinner. It is very amusing from the picture of obsolete manners it displays, as well as the quaint language it is written in. It is connected with some ideas in my mind produced by an observation of Lady Mary W. Montagu's: that after making the tour of Europe, its courts and cities, then visiting the most interesting parts of Asia and Africa, she had formed the opinion that the result of travelling was but a vain desire to *unite* the separate advantages of different countries, and a feeling of the superiority of home over them all: that the country girl who spun at her wheel all the week, and went to church on Sunday, devoutly believing the sermon and preacher, had a fairer chance of happiness than the sage, the hero, and the philosopher.

This is but a melancholy conclusion, and I doubt not that much depends on ourselves. Lady Mary was not happy either as a *wife* or *mother*; indeed, notwithstanding the taste and elegance of her *Letters*, there is an obvious shade of pedantry in their composition; if her aim was only that of a talented authoress, her end was attained.

But I think that two persons sufficiently cultivated to have a keen perception of the beauties of nature and the excellence of science and art, *must* lay by a store of interesting remembrance from travelling to effectually prevent the *ennui* too often predominant in domestic life, even with persons of amiable disposition. The vicissitudes and privations, admitting there is no more, are interesting in retrospect. Witness how two persons who have been casually united under such circumstances delight to dwell on them. This subject has made me wander. I believe I was led into it by saying I wished to turn to good account the time it might be expedient for us to remain here, where there is much, if rightly considered, which ought to enlarge the mind; first the whole face of inanimate nature presented in a new garb: then man, in a totally different aspect and state of society, with the peculiarities and customs arising from it.

How I do pity the man, or woman either, who can travel from Dan to Beersheba and say it is all barren! I am willing to allow something for difference of taste and disposition, and give the indulgence I *require myself*, for truly I *have* had my hours of weariness when all others seemed happy. I don't think the poor Esquimaux lady ever felt more wearied at the Opera than I have done, and my musings in a ball-room *have been* as sombre as Lara's. I am far from attempting to condemn the *too* many exiles in this country whose hearts have no home, who are divided from happiness, almost from hope,

in pining for the dear relationships of life, it may be for ties *more tender* than relations—oh no! *they* are but too deeply pitiable. What would be *my* visions now did the sea-wave sing

‘Twixt *me* and all that *is* mine own’?

though we two are comparatively solitary, if it can be called solitude—

‘Where thought meeteth thought ere from the lips it part.’

All this may be, and doubtless *is*, very happy for *me*, but cannot be very entertaining for you, yet in writing these words I feel convicted of two errors: first, I know *it is* novel to hear any one declare themselves happy, and I am doubly assured nothing can afford you equal pleasure with receiving the confirmation from myself, to whom your patient ear has been so often lent when I had nought but ills to recount to you,—and *this* cannot be forgotten.

So now suppose, for variety, I take you to a ball on the 12th of April. It was not my choice but fate—having declined so many, that if I persevere I must give offence, and though this would not vex me much if I were alone in question, I *will* not, *must* not for my dear Niel’s sake—and is a mournful necessity imposed by our situation. You must first suppose yourself at my tea-table, where a few of my especial allies have assembled to have a little talk before we depart, and some of the party are so amusing I can hardly get away until Niel interposes to make me go and dress.

I regret this description of mine would not make as good a figure on paper as the above-mentioned Lady Mary’s scarlet trousers do, for my dress was a very simple, but to my taste beautiful, blue and silver gauze, and the only ornament Niel would admit in my hair was a pearl comb; ‘anything more,’

he said, 'would injure by concealing.' You must know he is so vain of my hair, which in my honest opinion has only quantity and length to boast of.

I fear I cannot take you into my palkee, as my full dress requires all the room spared by my little person, but you can join the party who walk beside it—Campbell, the doctors (for we have an addition to our medical men, and a most agreeable one, in Dr. Patterson from the 45th as surgeon. He knew George very well in Burmah), Fenton, Blackwell, etc. As soon as we got into the room I ordered Fenton and Dr. Brodie to go away, being each six feet tall, and I would not choose to put my dimensions into contrast. Perhaps there is no place with less to mark a foreign land than a ball-room, where all the company are European and all the dresses English or French; for it is, I must tell you, the extremity of bad taste to appear in anything of Indian manufacture—neither muslin, silk, flowers, or even ornaments, however beautiful. This at first amazed me; when I wanted to purchase one of those fine-wrought Dacca muslins I was assured I must not be seen in it as none but half castes *ever* wore them. These dresses sell in London as high as £7 and £10. I do remember thinking myself as fine as the Queen of Sheba in one given me by dear Aunt Angel. So much for the variations in taste.

The appearance of a chance attendant, and the lofty room and punkahs in motion remind you where you are. I am no longer a dancer, and soon feel extreme weariness of the noise and glare of lights. The only persons whom I had not seen before and felt interested in, were a part of the D'Oyly family. Lady D'O. herself was not there, but her cousin Mrs. Snythe was by much the most interesting young woman I had seen in India: tall, and of the first order of fine forms; fair, with beautiful sunny locks worn in the Vandyke style. She was

dressed in white satin without any ornament. Her appearance was well contrasted with that of a countrywoman of mine, who was a fine-looking person, and as fine as dress and ornaments could make her.

By the way, this person on my arrival at the station declared herself to be a relation of mine, which I learned with utter astonishment. On hearing her former name, however, I traced the origin of the lady, whose aunt had been a housekeeper in my grandmother's family, and this girl called after her. One of her uncles had gone to India and received considerable aid and patronage from different members of our family; on coming home to see his friends, he found them in great distress, and also much reduced in character and esteem among their equals. Indeed I recollect, when a child, hearing the father of this woman spoken of as a particularly disreputable person. I think they were the only parishioners of my father's whom he entirely discountenanced. The brother, on returning from India, finding the state of things so bad, went off immediately, taking this girl with him. Unfortunately, one of her early companions was married to a soldier in the 13th, who, on coming to Dinapore, went to visit her. Mrs. S——, however, had not tact enough to conciliate her, and, by denying all knowledge of her, and refusing to see her, converted her into a deadly enemy. Sarah Jemmison was a frequent visitor of mine, and had been, I believe, much more respectable than the one who rejected her acquaintance; and she soon made the matter public, to the great dismay of Mrs. S——, who attempted to mend it by claiming kindred with me, who was well known to *have had* a grandfather. I was quite amused to see how carefully she avoided approaching me all the evening.

I next saw Mrs. Thompson, attended by a tall son I had

not observed before, nor, indeed, did I suppose she had any family so much grown up. I further learned that he had just arrived from England, and that his father now saw him for the first time. Certainly the more frequently I see her, I like her better. It is difficult to suppose her the mother of a numerous family. It must be the gentleness of her aspect and manner which conveys the idea of youth; over this mental endowment 'Age does not draw its withering traces.' The course of true love so seldom does run smooth, I must give a few lines to her story.

She and Captain T. were attached very early in life before the wise and prudent saw any reasonable prospect of their being united. However, they not being of the reasoning order of mortals, *did marry*, and I wish I had been unreasonable enough to have done the same five years ago. They did not, I believe, spend many days together. He departed for India a cadet, leaving her to

'The grief of heartlessness and hope deferred.'

However, the early tie he had formed soon brought maturity of mind, supplying the place of time and experience. With care and strict economy he saved the means of sending home for her. She left that young man an infant with her father, and after some years took home the younger branches of her family.

Next there was Mrs. Denny, looking more handsome than happy; but it would be to little purpose making out an inventory of ladies that you know as little *of* as you care *for*. Few, indeed, remain who are worth the trouble. It would be waste of time to dwell upon the good qualities of Mrs. — and her abundant hatred of her eldest daughter, chiefly for being ten years too old for her mamma's taste. She is to me

truly dreadful, as a woman and a mother, and seems to have peculiar satisfaction 'to touch the brink of all we hate,' in conversation and manner. I always try to get as far off from her as possible, as I am in a perpetual fever every time she opens her lips to speak, even though there be none other present than Niel. This poor girl is made a perfect Cinderella of, and performs the united offices of ayah and bearer to all the younger ones. Her dress and dejected appearance form such a contrast with the gaiety of her mother, it is quite pitiable.

Nor need I give you any portraits of gentlemen; there are none you would care for, that I have not mentioned, except that one with whom Blackwell is in conversation. His name is Hay; he had an only brother in the regiment, and came out to join the 44th for his wish to be near him. On arriving in Calcutta he found his brother dead; they were warmly attached, and both fine young men. Blackwell had been very intimate with the one who is lost, and to him the other naturally turns for sympathy and information.

This subject is a sorrowful contemplation for a ballroom. Oh! how few hearts *there* can bear being analysed! I feel quite rejoiced that it is time to go home. During a rapid undress, I was expressing my weariness and hopes that it might be very long before I went out again at night; Niel said he thought the evening very well spent. I stopped and turned in astonishment, at what I had never heard before—a direct contradiction. He went on: 'Because I had an opportunity of seeing how few were there to bear comparison with you,' though I well knew this was wilful delusion.

'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.'

On returning from reading the papers to-day, Niel pre-

sented me with some lines he had copied in pencil, saying they were so suitable to my taste he could not help copying them, as he must not abstract the papers. Even had they been worthless, the delicate attention to my feelings shown in this little act would have stamped it with value. But on reading them I really felt they were tender and beautiful in the highest degree, and to preserve them they shall be inserted here for you, too, to admire. It seems to me as if Niel and myself were two bodies with one soul, one going abroad to collect something to interest the half left at home.

FOREIGN LANDS.

'Speak but of foreign lands, and see
The child of nature wandering free,
The wild wood hunter fearless press
On through the trackless wilderness,

And shuddering trace the fearful path
The desert lion leaves in wrath ;
And feast the soul with all that lies
Lovely and sweet beneath the skies.

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'Tis thus---yet foreign lands and seas
Wake other, deeper thoughts than these.
For where is he who hath not lost
Some dear one on a foreign coast ?

Oh ! many a noble heart is laid
To moulder in the forest shade ;
The palm-tree rears its glorious crest
O'er many a loved one's place of rest.

River and sea and flowery isle,
Radiant with spring's eternal smile,
Have had their prey, have rent the ties
Of home-born, heart-linked sympathies.

Alas ! for this, affection pales
The eye grows dim, the spirit fails,
Till foreign lands become a sound
That stirs the bosom but to wound.'

And these sweet lines are written by a Miss Mary ——. It is a pity there is not generally more spirit and energy in female compositions, for there is often much deep and tender feeling. Mrs. Hemans, however, is an exception, for her poetry unites both these qualifications. She is, to my taste, the Sappho of English poetry, but dignified by a lofty and pure imagination which Sappho never knew.

IV

APRIL 23RD—AUGUST 13TH, 1827

17th July 1827.—*Bankipore (near Patna).*—One year to-day since I embarked for India; surely, my dearest friend, the misery of a whole existence has been compressed into that period of time. One year! *Can it be* that I have suffered so much in *one* year, or rather in three months?

I do not ask your sympathy or attempt to describe my bereavement, well knowing that *you* will feel for me beyond what I could wish; in truth, if I wanted to express to you my situation or my feelings, *I could not*. I seem to be surrounded by dreams, shadows, recollections, like the waves of the sea beneath a midnight sky, darkness without diversity. Hopeless, my sinking heart endeavours to comprehend *why* the hand of God has dealt with me thus heavily! Again and again I ask myself—‘What am I? what has one day made me?’

I know and believe the dispensation is from the hand of my Heavenly Father, who has dried up my source of temporal happiness, perhaps because I loved the creature more than the Creator. I may yet be enabled to attain resignation, and perceive that even in His wrath there is mercy; but oh! the dreary *present*! I may have years of existence to linger through. What is to become of me? How strange seems the capability of enduring that is sometimes given us, when

I look back on even the bodily suffering of the last three months.

‘Death shuns the wretch, who fain the blow would meet ;
I had not lived till now, could sorrow kill.’

But the changes have been so rapid, it will not surprise you, I often forget the *cause* and only retain the *sense* of pain ; then feel as if slowly awakening from a dream, a fevered vision, and look round in vain for something connected with the past : but *here* is the most trying part—that I seem alone in the awful tragedy of life. Parents, husband, friends have I none.

The only one whose presence could have consoled me was James, and he had just set out for the Nilgherry hills ; his health was then so bad, that if it had been possible I would have spared him the knowledge of my loss. Only he could have felt its extent, for, independent of all connection with me, his friendship for my loved Campbell was warm and sincere, far beyond that which such relationships usually produce. Certainly every kindness and delicate attention which it is possible for any one to receive is bestowed on me by Lady D'Oyly, and I am now long enough domesticated with her to feel her friendship a blessing, and to find all the attractions of her mind and manners soothe and support me and often win me for a moment from the remembrance of misery, until the bitter thought returns of—Where is he who did participate in all my feelings, and would so warmly have entered into this ? Even here, too, her friendship does not forsake me ; she is gifted with that intuitive feeling which tells her the only consolation left me is to talk over his affection and his loss. Knowing full well to speak of comfort is but mockery, she wisely judges it is a relief to communicate my feelings, and converses with me over our mutual con-

nections in the Highlands. She plays to me all those sweet Gaelic airs that he used to delight in, and brings her work for hours to my bungalow. . . .

I often think if I could have been prepared by any gradual change for the loss of Campbell, I could have borne it better. But oh! to be in one day taken from happiness to misery! To remember that he who saw the sunrise in health and hope was, before the next morning, to be numbered with the dead, cut off in all the energy of life and enjoyment!

On the 22nd of April, when we dined together and I pressed him to take something additional, I asked him why he refused: 'Was he ill?' He answered he never felt better in his life. I went as usual to drive with Blackwell, and he rode beside the buggy: we drove past the English burying-ground. Alas! *Could* the thought *then* have reached me that in two days more that earth was to cover him? In the evening, Blackwell, Fenton, and Dr. Brodie stayed with us. Fenton was complaining of illness, and the only change perceptible in Niel was that he refused to drink tea; yet he was in good spirits, though he spoke of feeling ill on going to bed, and became so restless in half an hour, that I said I must for my own satisfaction send for Brodie. I went to write in my dressing-room, where he immediately followed, saying he could himself better explain his sensations, and took the pen from me. When Brodie came he sent for Patterson, more as a matter of form than supposing it necessary, but in two hours after they became sensible of his danger. On first being roused he told me to send for Blackwell, who immediately came to me and rendered me every aid. Fenton also came, and some one of them, considering the horrors that awaited me more than myself, sent in for Mrs. Wright. But at this time I had not the most distant idea of the truth.

About one or two o'clock I was struck by the change in Brodie's manner, the more so as he had always tried to give me encouragement. About half an hour before I had been assisting to compose my beloved Campbell in bed, after being profusely bled. He did not at first see who it was, and when he did, opened his eyes and faintly smiled. I laid my head on his pillow and said, 'You are better?' He replied, 'Oh yes, much better'; then placing his arm over my neck he faintly said, 'Bessie, we have been *too* happy for this world.' The blood gushed from his arm, and while I was engaged in getting assistance he seemed to sleep. Brodie then entreated me to rest on the couch in the next room, while he would watch. To please him, and feeling exhausted, I did it, and sent Blackwell often to tell me what went on. I still received the same answer, that he slept.

At last Brodie came in, and the language of his countenance could not be concealed; indeed he had come, after consulting with the rest, to disclose the truth. I said before he spoke, 'For God's sake don't deceive me.' He replied, 'No! I would not; he is indeed very ill.' I was in a moment at his bedside, there was no need of asking more. I saw him, he breathed as softly as an infant. I had never looked on Death, but I *felt it was there*. There is no word to meet the agony of that moment—when I spoke and he heard me not. I pressed my lips to his, which were cold; I felt all was over, but could not speak or shed one tear, only lay my head on his breast. Some one—Brodie and Fenton, I believe—carried me out of the room. I lay on the couch where they placed me, all I wished was for none to speak to me.

There were then many around me, and I believe there was much said, but I know not what or by whom. The first thing I was conscious of was dear Blackwell, who was leaning

over the arm of the couch and bathing my temples with lavender, while his own tears fell so fast on my hands, which I could not cease to press on my eyes. It roused me to speak. I could only say, 'Oh! Blackwell, if I were but alone!'

He then proposed my going into my dressing-room, as so many of those who knew and valued my poor Nick had assembled in the house. I can hardly tell what passed for some hours. I entreated them to let me again see him—to no purpose. Colonel and Mrs. Sale came in about seven in the morning. Mrs. Sale said something of taking me to her house, which I refused, saying I would not quit my own. After a little conversation with Mrs. Wright, Colonel Sale took me abruptly in his arms off the couch and carried me into her house. Oh! I thought it cruel, inhuman; and the irritation of my feelings then almost convulsed me with tears. Mrs. Sale and Mrs. Wright did and said everything to soothe me, and in a few minutes I felt the folly of being distressed by anything that human hand could inflict. Besides, I knew what seemed so harsh was meant well, and in accordance with the customs of the country. In a few minutes Brodie and Fenton came in. I saw what they came to say. He had ceased to suffer; he was beyond the reach of pain and sorrow, and might then be spiritually present with me. For him I could no longer mourn, but for my own desolated state. When I said 'What has one day made me!' Brodie could only reply—'You are indeed, beyond all expression, to be pitied.'

Fenton begged I would express to him anything I wished to have done, and, guessing something of my feelings, mentioned that if I preferred a home of my own, there was next to Mrs. Wright a quarter which had been prepared for Kershaw and remained vacant; to this I willingly agreed, and when he and the rest were gone Blackwell came in to stay

with me. . . . I made him again and again repeat how my beloved Campbell had expired without a sigh or pang, and wore even in death an expression of such perfect composure and happiness, it was impossible to look on him unmoved.

The poor women of the regiment, whom I have before mentioned, had never lost sight of me and would not be kept away, in that vehemence of feeling so natural to the Irish. They all so bitterly lamented my fate, a stranger could not have told who was the personal sufferer. Poor Anne, who had been my kind nurse, again and again exclaimed—If any misfortune happened, where was *her friend*? Eliza, who had attended us so long at sea, I preferred as my permanent attendant; the others came backwards and forwards as they liked. With equal affection, she had more tact or power of adapting herself to my feelings; besides that, I was too delicate to be left alone—the attendance of a European woman was a sort of protection. . . .

Fenton had been busily employed in removing anything I might require into my new abode, and it was a relief when this first dreadful night came, when at last I was alone. They had considerably brought only such things in my sight as Eliza pointed out as being peculiarly my own, but this very separation proclaimed the change. My kind attendant sat at my feet and wept almost as bitterly as myself. The horrors of the preceding night had so worn me out, in addition to the lethargic influence of the climate, that I sobbed myself to sleep without changing my clothes.

All those who have known affliction can fully testify that the most acute perception of sorrow is at the moment of waking from such sleep, though at first perhaps only a vague and unconnected idea of *some* evil is presented. But every physical sense seems strengthened and invigorated to sharpen

the sting of anguish and deepen the root of incurable regret. Night, silence, and darkness, the symbol of death, have departed—nature revives.

‘But when shall morn visit the mould’ring urn?
Oh, when shall it dawn on the night of the grave?’

With the first dawn I arose from my wretched couch, so feverish and unnerved, I was thankful to bathe and get fresh clothes. While I was bathing, Mrs. Wright and Blackwell came in to know how I had passed the night. I soon joined them in my sitting-room and they sat with me till breakfast, which they prepared, and I went through the form of trying to eat.

But it is needless to torture myself with a further recital of minute circumstances, or of all the anguish preceding that last sad duty the living render to the dead. To see all that was mortal of him borne to the grave—for I would and did see it—was like another separate death. Why, from earliest youth, had my blood run cold at the sight or sound of a soldier’s funeral? Let any who like me has watched with burning eyes and breaking heart that sad procession, tell what they felt when it was finally lost to sight. That moment levelled all distinction of rank; my poor Eliza stood with her arm supporting me, and I was glad to lean my head upon her breast. She carried me to my couch, where long I lay without will or power to speak, listening to those deep sad notes of the bugle till they ceased and all was over.

In about an hour Fenton and Brodie returned to me, and I made an effort of despair to control my feelings and speak with them on matters of business, though my utter indifference about anything connected with myself induced me to beg of Fenton, who had taken on himself all responsibility, to do whatever he judged best without reference

to me; excepting that I earnestly requested that nothing which had belonged to Campbell, or that had ever been used by us, should be disposed of—which is the *invariable* custom here in all ranks—which they promised me should be done, although they thought it unwise. I then wrote a few lines to George, telling him I should not form any plan until I knew what he wished me to do. Brodie added all which was necessary for him to know.

Kershaw came also begging to see me, and did indeed seem to feel all that was possible for one to do for another. He came, he said, from Lady D'Oyly to me, who lamented her inability to come herself, requesting and entreating me to come to her, where I should have a bungalow for myself and none but my own friends should intrude. My spirit shrunk at the thought of going among utter strangers, but I was at length decided by Kershaw saying: 'My dear Mrs. Campbell, if Niel could dictate, it is *this* he would wish you to do,' . . . and commissioned him to tell Lady D'Oyly I should certainly remain here until I heard from my brothers.

I was at no loss for kind and hospitable invitations. I know not how many were made to me that day, until it was known I had accepted Lady D'Oyly's; people of whom I knew nothing came to offer their services. Excepting Mrs. Sale and those I had daily seen from the beginning, I entreated Mrs. Wright would prevent any one else from coming, as I could receive no consolation from society, and, having decided on my plans, required no assistance beyond my chosen friends. After, when I *could* feel *anything*, I was sorry I had not excepted Mrs. Thompson, who seemed most kindly interested.

Next day I began to experiente that the sword was too sharp for the scabbard. I felt ill, very ill, but what was bodily suffering? I continued for days, of which I hardly

remember anything, without any change, until the 5th of May. The first thought that like a burning arrow darted through my brain at gunfire, was that it was the anniversary of my marriage. I did not as usual get up, for to speak was torture. . . . The dreadful heat of my bedroom at length forced me to rise, and I went to the adjoining room and sat on the side of my bath. I had no more tears to shed, and gazed wordless and tearless on the water till my sight failed. I fainted, falling on the flags. I was much hurt by the fall, and when I did recover could, with difficulty, stand up, though I would not mention it, fearing that I might be less alone, by the watchfulness of those about me; and to be alone was my sole and perpetual wish. In the morning I first thought—'Oh! that the night were again returned!'

The day before Campbell's death we were talking of large parties. He said to Blackwell, 'I mean to give a very large party on the 5th of May; pray consider yourself engaged.' When he came in after breakfast, I asked him if he recollected it and told him what day it was. He was almost the only one to whom I could bear to speak of the past, and he seemed to know what I thought, felt, or regretted, without my expressing it. There is also something in the genuine sympathy of a young heart more soothing than what we *generally* find in those more advanced in life—and this cannot be wondered at, for every step we advance and every revelation of our probationary state must quench some of our brighter feeling, and diminish as well our capability for bestowing as for receiving happiness.

. . . Towards evening, as Dr. Brodie rather delayed his usual visit, Blackwell went in search of him. I could not bear to say I was ill, as then I should be always distressed by the restraint of some one staying to watch me. Still I could not

conceal the violent spasms which every few minutes returned. While Blackwell was away Fenton came in with Mrs. Sale ; I managed, however, to converse without betraying that I suffered more than usual. After she had left me Fenton came back to ask me some question, and perceived I was in violent pain, attended by shivering fits. When the doctor came he sent for a draught and recommended me to get into bed immediately, but when I attempted to stand I fell powerless. Mrs. Wright just then returned from her evening drive and she, being quite ignorant of my illness during the day, was greatly alarmed. She begged Fenton to carry me into my room, where they laid me down and left me with Mrs. Wright and my woman. They thought I was dying, and I did hope it myself. Fenton and Blackwell sat in the next room, or walked about the verandahs till near morning, when I seemed a little more calm and inclined to sleep. I was then quite exhausted ; in the early part of the night between the violent returns of pain, I used to weep in agony at the sad change, to open my eyes and behold none but strangers in place of that countenance ever beaming the tenderest love. In health Niel was my companion and my friend, but it was in illness that I felt his full value. He so well understood and so gently performed each little office of affection and care, even with the slightest ailment I was wretched if he was out of my sight. I fancied every other hand pained me, every voice but his agitated my nerves.

Indeed it seemed as if each hour of passing time echoed its separated knell of departed happiness, for all the ordinary occurrences of life love had refined into sources of enjoyment. . . .

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I think it was on the 28th of April, two days after my beloved Niel had been removed to his last silent resting-place. . . . Well-meaning but ill-judging persons had come, as they thought, to keep up my spirits by relating the gossip of the cantonment. I listened with feelings similar to what I should suppose a person on the rack did feel. But I was patient, hoping the less interruption I gave, it would the sooner cease . . . When I did lay me down on my couch, the same we had slept on coming up the river, by which he had so often knelt to bathe my feverish temples, to smooth my pillow and talk of hope and comfort—what were then my feelings released from their long restraint! Hour after hour I wept, or rose and walked about my room. . . . At length weariness overcame my excitement, and I lay down with sensations of stupefaction, how long I can hardly tell, for I was roused first by the voice of Blackwell speaking to my woman, then by Mrs. Wright's appearance. A most frightful Nor'wester had come on early in the night, every door had burst open, the peals of thunder and torrents of rain were so awful, all said they had not before heard anything equal, and these kind people, fearing I might be alarmed, had each hurried to my house actuated by one feeling. But I had not even *heard it*, and was as much amazed at their appearance as they were at my tranquillity.

After the illness I have spoken of on the 5th, Dr. Patterson earnestly recommended my immediate removal from the cantonment, as air and exercise were necessary to my existence, and I could not endure the idea of going out there. Lady D'Oyly sent every day to make inquiry for me, and they at last induced me to fix the 10th for my removal, and also in preparation to go out a little in the rear of my house, which was quite retired. Here, dear Blackwell and Fenton, Brodie

and all those who were interested in me came every evening and did all that kindness could suggest to console and interest me. Feeling then how soon I was to be separated from those who had so assiduously endeavoured to support and assist me, and borne with all the waywardness of grief, I tried as much as I could, at least, to shew that I was sensible of all, and at these moments to exclude as far as it was possible the return of self-engrossing sorrow. And I did not fail until the night before I quitted Dinapore.

I was during the day earnestly desirous of making such arrangements as were necessary before my departure, and particularly such as I knew my precarious state of health rendered proper. I especially wished to select and destroy various papers and letters connected only with family affairs, then to give Fenton others on matters of business. I was to leave Dinapore at six in the morning, and it was ten at night before I commenced this task. I had often during the day gone into my bedroom to begin, and as often found it vain. *One* came to beg I would eat, *another* to recommend me to go to *sleep*; perhaps a third to sit and talk to prevent my being 'lonely.' There were all my husband's things I wished to separate, some to keep with me, others to send to the Isle of France to Robert Campbell. And this was an occupation in which I *could not endure* the presence of any third person. I frequently through this day felt gasping with the pain, the oppression, that overwhelmed me, knowing too, that all those who were thus torturing me meant well and would have made any personal sacrifice to relieve me. At last I gave up all effort and consented to go out, but my spirit was subdued, when I there gazed on the forsaken habitation where we had lived so happy, where he had died. Every inanimate object was around me, as when my poor Niel had first lifted me from

my couch to the window. The closing day, *the last, the last* I was to spend, *two months* only from the period of our arrival—the shrinking thought of resigning my own home and being an inmate in that of a stranger—all overcame me, I gave way to a flood of tears. When I remember the night I passed, the variety of wretchedness inflicted, even by opening the almiras containing our articles of dress, the things that his hand had placed there, the clothes belonging to myself in which he had so often dressed me, so many of which had been chosen by him, now to be worn no more—over each my heart bled afresh and morning came before the task was finished to my satisfaction. I felt the probability of my death to be so strong that all I wished done must be concluded that night, or never.

24th July, Bankipore.—My days pass here with little change, my kind, dear friend has so considerably arranged everything for me that I am as much at home as if I were in my own house; taking away all the feeling of dependence by leaving me completely mistress of my time and actions, she at the same time secures me every attention and comfort, and only herself comes twice or thrice in the day as a visitor. I have all my own servants, and Eliza also with her child and ayah, but they are not in my way at any time.

The weather is now intensely hot between the rains, which set in early in June. The only moment when a current of air can be felt is before sunrise. In accordance with Lady D'Oyly's earnest wish I go out every morning in her tonjin. The bearers generally choose their own way by the banks of the river, and then return into the garden where they set me down and I loiter there as long as the shadows remain.

Though there are numbers of visitors always with the family I am as private as if fifty miles off. . . . At night Lady D'Oyly comes to my bungalow and sits till I feel disposed to go to bed; sometimes Sir Charles comes with her, sometimes Kershaw and Blackwell; the latter generally sits with me during her ride, and in the morning gets the tonjin and bearers ready at the proper hour, summons Eliza to assist me to dress, and walks by my tonjin and to the garden. By the time I come in Lady D'Oyly has returned from her ride, she leaves the rest of the party and alights at my door. After my walk I generally bathe and lie down till breakfast time. After breakfast she brings her work-basket and sits with me for a couple of hours. Blackwell reads to us, or to me if she has any engagement, till three o'clock, when the family separate, as the dinner hour is four. Generally when Lady D'Oyly is dressed she sits with me till the bell rings for dinner. This is *usually* the disposal of time when I am well enough to sit up; at others I am whole days unable to rise off the couch in my dressing-room where Lady D'Oyly sits with me. I have frequent visits from Dr. Patterson and Brodie, sometimes professionally necessary. Fenton, too, often comes and spends the day with the D'Oyly's and an hour or two with me.

On the 29th of June, George arrived. How strange and sad that meeting seemed! I had not the least recollection of his appearance, and might have passed him by as a stranger. What a change a separation of twelve years makes, not alone in exterior but in feeling. Alas! little we know when parting from a beloved relative *how* or *where* we shall meet again. Brothers and sisters part in the ignorance of youth and hope and untamed expectation; before they meet in after life, sorrow and disappointment may have dealt with each, new connections formed, separate interests existing. It is like a

rainbow dissolving in the shower, the fading away of that beautiful chimera of the soul.

There is hardly a vestige of his early character left, and his habits are so reserved that I do not gain much in companionship with him; in fact I am much as I was before his arrival, and depending still for sympathy and friendship on my former associates.

Three very large tamarind trees grow at one end of my bungalow, shadowing the window beside which I sleep. . . . Beneath the largest stands the tomb of a girl sufficiently fortunate to *die young*—‘e’er sin could blight or sorrow fade.’ I trust I may be forgiven that frame of mind which makes me envy her dreamless sleep. Flora Mary Campbell—she is, or was, the child of one not distantly connected with us. I always pause to rest by that spot; it seems, against all conviction, as if I had known and loved her. In these still clear nights *often, often* I go from my dressing-room window to that consecrated spot and sit hours almost in a waking dream, especially in the moonlight: there is nothing to fear, and the situation renders that spot private.

I love yet dread the return of moonlight, it is inexpressibly beautiful, and there is something in it here beyond description, like a glimpse of another state of existence. I can hardly believe at these hours that a sojourner in a world of sin and wretchedness may gaze on such a picture. There is something so spiritual in the aspect of the earth and sky. The emotions it excites are beyond all utterance; you may see the smallest insect in the grass; the lightest spray of the bamboo seems as it were pencilled on the sky.

In the long unbroken solitude of these nights, as I sit in the

open air, musing over the past, the sad tumultuous story of my life starts before me ; I find myself here on the spot, where it was so long my earnest hope and object to be, where I fancied all my trials were to end, and find their adequate recompense in the affection of my fond, my beloved husband. In sad review all our visionary plans of happiness return to my recollection, . . . above all the rest, that one so fondly cherished that we should one day return to home, to be re-united to friends loving and loved. Even when I shed tears over the remembrance of some dear and valued relative left behind, the idea that *we* were *together*, and each to the other a world of hope and confidence, soon dried them.

Oh ! with what unutterable anguish does the picture change and lose its visionary hues in the gloomy night of reality ! I start as if a thunderbolt had passed me, remembering that the *same* light that blessed us *then* is now shining as calmly on his *grave*. The day will return and the sun rise in the same glory as when it first revealed an Indian landscape to my delighted eyes. How eagerly I woke him to see it also. My voice can waken him no more ! I often pine for the relief of a cloudy day. The sun shines on with that oppressive brilliancy as if it mocked at misery, it is strange the effect now produced by almost every circumstance, which a few months before would have influenced me differently.

I arrived here just when the most violent Nor'west gales sweep the Upper Provinces with awful and resistless force, but at the same time with salutary influence ; it is impossible to give you any idea of the violence of such, especially a dry Nor'wester ; it is a perfect whirlwind of dust, leaves and sand. Vast branches, sometimes entire trees, are lifted into the air,

with the roofs of houses, while tremendous peals of thunder and vivid lightning at intervals illuminate the darkened atmosphere.

How often I used to watch the approach of one of these storms with strange and gloomy pleasure, the images of ruin and destruction seeming only congenial to my feelings; indeed, I could have lain unmoved if I had been told the termination of time and earth were approaching, for I knew there could be nothing worse to come, no future to exceed the present in misery. Frequently these tempests returned at night, when I have every moment expected the roof to be taken off the bungalow; windows, doors, all burst open, and frequently every particle of clothes about my bed blown into the verandah. But I have lain without moving until the tempest had spent its violence, and the return of morning showed the ground strewn with leaves and blossoms.

Yes, these were fitting emblems, these broken and scattered branches, stripped of usefulness and beauty. They were all eloquent, in the pathetic words of Burns:

‘ “ The sweeping blast, the sky o’er-cast,”
The joyless winter day,
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May :
The tempest’s howl, it soothes my soul,
My grief it seems to join ;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine ! ’

We had last night one of these terrible storms; I cannot judge by comparison if they are more or less severe than usual, but George said he had never heard anything so fearful. He hastened into my bedroom supposing I must be alarmed, and was somewhat surprised to find me quietly in bed, totally unconcerned about the matter; as I very truly told him, ‘ I had

nothing to *fear*, nor anything to *wish* for in the prolongation of life, and if the next flash struck me dead, I fully confided in the wisdom of God in so ordering it.' He however, wished me to come into the centre room as the most safe, where poor Eliza sat overpowered with terror. The roof trembled, the locks on the doors shook with the peals of thunder until rushing torrents of rain by degrees subdued it. Shortly after I had gone to bed, which the coolness of the morning rendered pleasant, my dear Lady D'Oyly came over in her tonjin, . . . and remained with me until her ayah came to tell her Sir Charles was waiting to read prayers.

It would be impossible to convey any just idea of the feeling and tenderness, shown in everything towards me by her, nor is Sir Charles less kind. . . . Often I have in these visits seen his eyes filled with tears; memory may have been busy with him too, Lady D'Oyly is his second wife. He lost at an early age his first, after a brief union and long attachment. She was, I am informed, a most lovely woman, with talents of the first order; they were united as fondly by love as by community of feeling and taste, and lived in so much happiness, that to his domestic and sedentary habits, a state of widowhood and destitution of social comfort was insupportable. I *have heard* that when dying, she pointed out the present Lady D'Oyly as the person most likely to make him happy, and after a short time he married the beautiful Miss Ross. I believe her relation and guardian, the Marquis of Hastings, did not approve of her choice, as some more wealthy suitors sought her hand, and Sir Charles was much encumbered by the debts of his father. She had fixed her choice and they were married; few things have interested me so much as to hear her with eloquent affection speak of his first wife and dwell upon her beauty, talent and goodness of heart, and speak of the affliction Sir

Charles had suffered, and the tenderness he still regarded her memory with.

I often perceived she was doing so purposely, to lead me to believe that time can triumph over the deepest sorrow, and certain it is, they seem happy beyond the lot of almost any I know, though the deep commiseration of his voice and look often assures me he is alive to the past, and the sense of it perhaps awakened by my situation.

I have received two or three letters from Frank Gouldsbury, inviting us to go to Maldah, which George seems to wish we should do, after the rains and river subside. I cannot think without dread of leaving Patna. It now feels like my home, a haven of rest, beyond which lies the troubled stormy ocean, . . . and, however I may here have suffered, the place is also endeared by the memory of past happiness, of many, many fond associations. . . . When George speaks of going, my heart sinks in fresh despondency, for he seems indifferent to all, and cannot share my regret.

1st August.—I will endeavour to write a little every day, it is a relief to my heart. I have been, alas! so long accustomed to the happiness of daily communication of thought and feeling, that to exist without it is insupportable, to one, too, by nature inclined to confide. Oh, how often do I now sadly feel the change of having none to whose confidence I am entitled. Therefore, the comfort of *thus speaking* to one dear untiring friend, however distant, will beguile some wretched moments, and I can foresee this and every other resource will be but too little to support me when I quit this spot, where so many feel and sympathise with me. To be cast alone upon the thorny path of life was an evil for which I was unprepared. I well knew that trials and difficulties are inseparable from the happiest lot, but I hoped and believed that under all such,

his affection and care should have supported me. . . . James is ill and cannot come to me ; I am unable to bear a voyage to England, especially alone. Indeed, my helplessness at sea renders such a step all but impossible.

There is no part of George's habits more at variance with mine than the indecision of his movements and purposes ; he never for twenty-four hours holds the same intentions. This is quite misery to me, as my feelings are directly opposite. He talks one day of returning to Burmah, the next of going to Penang, then Madras ; what he *will* decide on I cannot guess, but this uncertainty renders me additionally unhappy and comfortless.

The word *Home* gives me a pang ; it has nearly lost its meaning to my ears, although so lately comprehending all that gives existence value. I had a visit this morning which left me very sad :—my old companion, Thomas Hart, who was proceeding with a detachment to Cawnpore, as medical attendant : it is just fifteen months since we parted at Kilderry, where I was then staying on a last visit to my dear Mrs. Hart ; he also came for the same purpose. Alas ! with what gaiety *then* we talked of meeting in India ! and we *have met*—but under what circumstances ! . . . He spent all the morning with me talking of Kilderry and all our friends, and mentioned to me, what I could hardly think or *wish* to believe, that Charlotte Hart was to be married to a Mr. Gough, a young man who had just arrived in Derry before I came away from Calcutta. He was not the kind of person she ought to be united to, and well I knew how differently the affections were placed when we parted.

He told me of the death of a young man whose name I mentioned before, Hay of the 38th. The melancholy of his appearance had struck me on meeting him at a ball at

Dinapore in conversation with Blackwell. In one of the late Nor'west gales, which on the river are very dangerous, something being wrong with the budgerow during the night, he was on deck, and in the darkness and confusion fell overboard, was never seen more. Sad fate of two brothers, within one year after leaving home.

‘What is man’s history, born, living, dying,
Leaving the still shore for the restless wave
Driven by storm, over shipwrecks flying
And casting anchor in the silent grave.’

As boats are now daily passing, George is urgent that I should name a day for our departure. . . . I must also lose the attendance of my faithful servant, which is a real grief to me. Her gentleness and capability has rendered her almost necessary, besides her having been with me since I left England; her manners were so pleasant, or otherwise she understood mine. I am often whole days without speaking to her, yet she is always attentively on the watch to serve me, without any imagination of my being offended from my silence, which an ignorant woman would immediately take for granted. George says I must take a native woman, and to all of them I have such an antipathy, it redoubles my regret at parting with my own.

My time will be occupied for some days by making the necessary preparations and also getting some clothes made up, as the state of my health and the seclusion in which I have lived had rendered my attention to this point unnecessary.

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10th August.—Since I last wrote I have had little unoccupied time between persons coming to say farewell and sending my things into my budgerow.

There was but one wish lingered near my heart, and that one my beloved and feeling friend contrived to gratify on the 3rd of this month. She accompanied me on a last visit to Dinapore. *Little, little* did I dream when we landed there on the 25th of February, when he carried me from my bed to the palanquin, exhausted by fever, that in two months he should find a grave under the earth he trod on. Oh! had I known in those succeeding days when I could bear no hand but his to touch me, that it was *for him, not for me*, that the grave was ready, that *I* should live to stand by his death-bed on the *same spot!* I am as little capable of expressing, by any combination of words, the mortal agony of my feelings *then*, as I am now of conveying the force of the strange and wondering incredulity with which I gazed on the spot where he slept in death. . . . How could I believe that one moment had dissolved the union between two souls which for so many years had clung together in spite of every discouraging circumstance? Did He who endued them with these indestructible affections awaken them but to perish? Oh, how would it soften the destitution of my feelings could I receive the opinion that he was still permitted to look upon me. . . . The rank grass seemed to have risen with cruel rapidity, as if to efface every trace of how lately the earth had been disturbed, and when I rested my burning forehead on it, cool and moist, I thought, of this at least some shall accompany me. I placed it in my breast, bitter, bitter token of lost happiness. Had I been alone, hours might have passed unnoticed, but at length the oft-repeated pressure of Eliza D'Oyly's hand, her sobs and tears, at last roused me to the remembrance that I was indulging my feelings at the risk of her safety. The sun had risen high, and shot down his beams with intense heat, and as she had forbidden any attendant to follow from the boat, she

was unsheltered. I said to Blackwell, 'Now, dear, I am ready, I can recall this spot when I am in Ireland or the Highlands.'

I paused but for one instant alone to press my lips to the cold stone, and followed with their kind aid to where our palkees waited to take us on board. Both for privacy and convenience we came by water, as I could not support the idea of meeting any one. . . .

On our return we sailed against the current, which was so prodigiously strong the boat pitched frightfully. Eliza was very ill, but I was too wretched to feel sickness, and it gave me another strong proof how much the mind can govern our bodily sensations. The half of the motion I then felt, at any other time would have rendered me incapable of moving when the hand was near that used to smooth my pillow and administer to my slightest wish. *Now*, though I could hardly keep my place on the couch where I lay, I was unconscious to all

'But helpless, hopeless, brokenness of heart.'

It was not alone that Niel was a careful and affectionate husband, his sweetness of temper and delicacy of feeling followed him into the most retired scene of domestic privacy. If he had a letter to write he brought it to my side, if I remained half an hour absent he followed to inquire the cause, and on my part his companionship was so necessary to my happiness that I have felt disappointed if any chance in company placed us too distant from each other to converse. The hour he was absent on duty seemed interminable. Did he ever return without the tender inquiry, 'If I were well,' and the clasp of fond affection? How often in allusion to my illness he would say,

‘I could not endure my existence, to wake in the morning and miss your face beside me.’ Daily he would ask, ‘Do you suppose there are any persons in the world so perfectly happy as we are?’

And this sprang from the excellence of his own disposition, not from any merit of mine, for in every relation of life he was the same. How well do I remember his mother’s emphatic declaration, that in twenty-eight years he had never once disobeyed or caused her pain.

Lady D’Oyly came alone. She seemed very low-spirited, perhaps from the remembrance of the morning, and seeing how I dreaded leaving her, and often, often repeated her wish that George would either have prolonged his stay, or left me still at Patna. The wind has been blowing up the river with such violence that it was useless to attempt proceeding. Heaven knows I dread the change. . . .

Added to this, I have other causes of vexation and annoyance just now, which might be *told*, but cannot *well* be written, as none can tell the fate of what is committed to paper, and whatever is connected with others requires circumspection. Could I be assured that these pages would meet your hands, and yours only, this reservation would be unnecessary, which obliges me often to speak of an effect without explaining its cause, which is mutually unsatisfactory. You might justly think that my present unhappiness did not admit of any aggravation, and would hardly believe what I might tell you. It seems to me there is no bound or termination to the miseries that beset an unmarried woman at my age here. I am sure Lady D’Oyly sees and suspects something of the truth, but she is too delicate to make any inquiry.

I heard this morning from Blackwell of the death of another friend, Mr. Everard of the Lancers, who was so often with me on the river, and such a favourite with my poor Niel. When I remember how amiable and accomplished he was, and how many, many pleasant days we passed together, I sigh for my own fate, not his. It was ever thus: the flowers are taken, the weeds left.

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AUGUST 14TH—NOVEMBER 30TH, 1827

14th August.—*On the Ganges below Barr.*—Again I am on the river, my dear friend, re-passing the scenes I so lately quitted. I am scarcely able to hold my pen from the motion of the boat and my own weakness, but I gladly take it up to fly from my own miseries for a little, or rather to deaden the sense of the present, by detailing the past. I can hardly see, for I have wept myself nearly blind, and did not think any sorrow could reach my heart so deeply as the parting from my friends at Bankipore. . . . I cannot sleep, I cannot read, everything recalls the past. The delusion of my imagination is so strong that I often fancy myself still proceeding to Dinapore, and almost turn to look for my lost Campbell.

The weather has been tremendous for the last two days; the motion of the boat so great that it requires a constant effort to keep on my couch. The violence of the rain resembles what we meet about the Line at sea. In the intervals of the showers, I am so relieved by getting the window lifted, however sad are the emotions produced by gazing again on the landscape. *Then* how delightful was its novelty. All was beautiful, or was it the tone of my own feeling which rendered it so? were the trees more brightly green, the bamboo huts grouped with more picturesque effect? Oh, where is the happiness within, the air of comfort which rested on every object? *All, all* seems desolate. The tall palmiras and coca

trees appear emblematic of death and mourning. The ancient and populous city of Patna is dreary beyond description at this season; even under the most favourable aspect a town in India is gloomy. . . . The city extends seven miles along the bank of the Ganges, and the stream had now risen so high we could sail close to the walls.

In every building in India admission of air is the chief object, all the houses are flat-roofed and surrounded with railings that the inhabitants may sleep occasionally there, or sit to enjoy the air from the water; and here you see them in the evening extended on their mats, smoking the hookah, which truly appears the only enjoyment of a native. We sailed by some extensive and detached houses in utter ruin, which once may have belonged to the rich Mohammedan invader, long since passed away; these may be distinguished from the residence of the Hindoo by the mosque forming a conspicuous feature in the building. So closely are their religious impressions entwined with their habits and vices, it forms a strong proof of the wisdom and the subtilty of their great Prophet; the mosque and the zenana stand contiguous. . . .

What an amazing change the increase of the river makes in the scenery. The ground over which we are now sailing, when I passed six months ago, was fields of rice or flax, or arid wastes of sand, where nothing but the actual love of walking could have induced me to go—rendered still more dreary by the solitary vulture, which we often drove from the spot where he sat to watch for any prey the current of the stream might convey. Oh, how desolate everything seems. We may expect a stormy night, the black clouds gather fast around, and vivid flashes of lightning every moment increase and compel me to close the blinds.

18th August.—We have had a tremendous night, with torrents of rain all the morning; it is now almost sunset; for the first time its beam has been visible during the day. It was impossible to proceed; in fact, we had great difficulty in maintaining our position where we took it up last night, on a waste and dreary bank of sand, an island in this river sea, an uniform desert on which I can only distinguish one group of most miserable huts and a herd of buffaloes and goats, watched by two meagre naked boys. The wind whistles so mournfully through the high reeds which surround the boat; there is something in it which gives me a sensation of such hopeless indescribable loneliness—the want of human sympathy—that I should feel relieved even were a voice to pronounce my name or a sleeping child to breathe beside me. What strange and varying feelings sweep the hidden chords of the human heart, and here George sits smoking as calmly as a Turk.

. . . The prodigious breadth of the river here prevents me even distinguishing where we are. A little below lie a fleet of boats, storm-stayed like ourselves. The bearer tells me it is a detachment of European soldiers, and I should think his report is correct, as Captain Lintott, my old friend in Chatham, was reported to be on his way to Dinapore when I left Patna. How often we two talked of meeting in India. Alas! how am I now—

‘A weed upon the ocean thrown.’

With my lamented Campbell, how soon the dreariness of these evenings would have been exchanged for all the glow of friendly congratulation.

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19th August.—*Monghir*.—We reached this station about four o'clock. The storm has dispersed, and the air felt

delightful. George expressed a wish to visit the celebrated Hot Springs . . . to which I agreed. The hills around Monghir are covered with immense stones, which strongly impress the idea of their having been brought there by volcanic eruption, which the neighbourhood of the Hot Springs would seem a further confirmation of. How very, very like they were to some scenes in Ireland, where heath, bramble, and blaeberry cover the masses of granite; nor were these 'grey stones of the hill' destitute of graceful foliage, innumerable creepers and profusion of the datura were there. I thought how carefully we cultivate the latter in our greenhouse at home. . . . There are four or five springs, and they change their properties with the seasons, those which are hot in the rains are cold in the winter months. Only one was actually hot when we visited them; in that I could not bear my hand for a second. It is enclosed by a low wall, with four rows of steps descending to the brink: on the last I could not rest my foot. The water is more pure and transparent than anything I ever saw before. The bottom is formed of rock, through the fissures of which you see an appearance similar to that of fixed air ascending to the surface and bubble on the top for an instant. At one end the stream steals away from the spring, and you may trace it far into the valley, smoking and misty. The scene is highly romantic, tall, feathery palmiras mix with the spreading boughs of the banyan-trees.

The natives lie with their pitchers of water, famed for its excellence, ready to offer for sale to any casual visitor. Large flocks of goats browse on the herbage at this season, now the height of the rains. The transitory verdure is beautiful.

I cannot agree with those who call a voyage on the Ganges at any season uninteresting. 'To tearless eyes and hearts at ease' how much there is to admire. The splendid outline of the Rajemahl Hills is now opening on the sight. After the deluge of yesterday the fields of rice, indigo, and flax, are as verdant as the meadows at home. Vast flocks of goats, cows, or buffaloes feeding at the edge of the water, or lying at rest under the shadow of huge banyan-trees; even the shepherd at this distance forms an interesting feature in the scene, and I must in justice admit, that for picturesque effect the native is incomparable! The soft, wavy folds of muslin which they roll round them in such a manner—it realises the idea of the drapery on an antique statue; their free and untaught attitudes are so graceful, I am sure I never walked or rode out, without again admiring them.

We passed the Colgon rocks crowned with the sacred mosque, and rich with an endless variety of creepers, in many parts quite concealing them; it was late, and the lamp was lit in the tomb of the Fakeer. How long it was visible, softly gleaming over the waters; it reminded me of the taper in Goldsmith's *Hermit*—'with hospitable ray'—for there is a neat bungalow close by for the accommodation of travellers. We shall shortly leave the great river; the stream divides above the Palace of Rajemahl. The station of Maldah is, I think, 26 miles higher up in a northerly direction, and this nullah is only accessible in the rains.

The weather has cleared up, but though the rain has abated, the sultry oppression of the air is beyond description. I have so long been accustomed, as all people are in Bengal, to darkened rooms, that the glare of light from the water

almost pierces like arrows. I believe the system of shutting the blinds is not so general in Madras, as George cannot bear it, and, to my horror, sits with all doors and windows wide open. I lie almost all the morning on my couch in the inner apartment and shut my eyes, that the ayah may suppose me asleep.

A few days more will terminate this voyage, and I know not why my depression increases, unless it is that I have lived so long alone that society is a restraint, or rather I expect it must be: I must not dream of finding another Lady D'Oyly. Of my cousin Frank I know nothing, though I feel a strong interest in him, but I warmly love his family, and, in particular, his sister Letitia; therefore I should not allow the idea of our being personally unacquainted to make me low. I suspect it is more the introduction to his wife I dread; I never before felt so unfitted for female society, and I need not remind you it never was my preference; since I married my disinclination increased. So seldom had I found my fellow mind among my own sex, I more fully appreciated the happiness of an union of taste and pursuits with my husband, a companion I could equally love and respect. My friendships with men have been permanent, and with ladies they generally have ended with little satisfaction, and finally, I am more at ease in the society of men, and don't feel it necessary to perform any artificial part. I have been forced into so many petty quarrels and worthless altercations among my lady friends, that I was rejoiced from my soul to renounce them *all*, and anchor fast on the firm foundation of my husband's fond heart and sound sense. It is unnecessary to speak of exceptions, which nature or education has graciously left as redeeming points. But it was with these feelings I went to be the guest of Lady D'Oyly; often did I amuse her with the description of my preliminary horror, and my

delight in her society increased tenfold when I found she was deeply tinctured with my private opinions ; as she thus expressed it to me :

‘ Indeed, dearest Bessie, I cannot deny I do not like strange women.’

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27th August.—*Maldah*.—A week has glided by since I wrote last, *how* or *why* I scarcely know. The weather has been oppressive, and I have done very little but lie on my couch and read. I ought, however, to tell you a little of the place and my companions before I speak of myself. (There is here / an extensive manufactory of silk to which the station lends its name,—Maldy silks. The society consists, first of the commercial resident, then the judge and magistrate, the surgeon, and a few indigo planters. Having presented them *en masse*, it is but courtesy to give them individuality, beginning with Mr. Grant, who is very highly spoken of as a well-informed and agreeable man ; he is a Highlander, and has been many years in India. Mrs. G. is also a native of Ross or Inverness ; they have a large family. Dr. and Mrs. Lamb are said to be a very nice couple also, but I can see, or fancy I see, that my fair cousin Mrs. G. is not very partial to English ladies, and rather shuns than seeks their society. Of her what shall I say ? She is of course dark, but has radiant eyes and fine teeth, her figure a little defective ; she is about my size ; she has a most charming voice and plays beautifully. There is a lovely little girl, the picture of her father’s family, with sweet blue eyes and fair as a lily. She is called Bessie, after my dear Mrs. Gouldsbury, just walking about. There will soon be a second, and there cannot possibly be a more affectionate mother than Mrs. G. Of Frank I speak last, because I have most to say. He is a

delightful young man, affectionate and gentlemanlike; so devoted to his wife and child, and tenderly mindful of his friends at home. His judicial appointment here occupies all his time, and the situation is a very good one. . . . Mrs. Gouldsbury is very near her confinement, and naturally likes to spend the morning in her own room. Frank goes to his kutcherry at nine and never returns before five. George chooses to take up his abode in a tent in the compound, and is seldom seen from breakfast till dinner. And what becomes of me? I sit in Mrs. G.'s dressing-room, and am glad to assist in cutting out work, or anything of that kind she now requires. Then, when she wishes to rest, or is engaged with her child, I retire to my own room and undress, and lie under the punkah till my ayah comes in to bustle and torment me with re-dressing.

I always feel pleasure in seeing Frank return, he is affectionate without any professions, and we have mutual pleasure in talking of home and friends. After dinner he and George go out and drive, and Mrs. G. generally goes out in her tonjin with the baby on her knee. I lie on my bed or sit at the window, as the case may be, and thus time has passed hitherto, with one only bright spot, two letters from Lady D'Oyly, and one from Blackwell, both full of regret and affection. While I was reading them I thought that

'Bearing still a breast so tried, Earth is no desert even to me.'

21st September.—I can hardly account to you for a whole month having passed without even attempting to write to you, unless I confess the truth—'A hopeless darkness settles o'er my heart.' At the same time there is no particular cause or change to account for it. Perhaps on the whole my health is better, and renovating, though slowly. At times I have

suffered dreadfully, and do so yet, and have no other prospect for some time to come. Yet this is the least evil I have to complain of.

This month is the breaking up of the rains, and the most oppressive of any in the year, there is no moment of refreshment; at once damp and sultry, the thunder is terrible, and rains violent beyond description.

For the first time since I left home I have been tortured with headaches. You may remember what I used to suffer, and I hoped this misery had passed by. I suppose I may attribute them now to change of habits and want of exercise, for until the last few days I have never gone out; I felt averse to see others or be seen by them. At Patna I never had the effort to begin, for I went out from the first as a thing of course, there was no choice on my part; before Lady D'Oyly went herself to ride she always came and saw me off. Here I felt no interest in any thing or any person, and something even in the place was dispiriting. Yet it is, or ought to be, a relief to get out, and English people at home can but faintly imagine the eagerness with which this one hour is sought by all, after being for the long day a prisoner within the gloomy walls of an Indian mansion,—or, as it is with me, in my own room. The circulation of air in driving, the change and succession of even inanimate objects, the splendid sunsets, all arouse fresh thoughts and recollections. There came over me so many almost forgotten feelings, too sad for pleasure, and yet I cannot call them pain, for these, however sad,

‘Are rapture to the dreary void,
The leafless desert of the mind,
The waste of feeling unemployed.’

In these moods of mine I cannot bear to speak; I have almost nothing to say, for with George, who is my usual

companion, I have scarcely any subject of interest in common. His long absence has rendered him indifferent to much that would interest me. Our acquaintances are unknown to each other, and even of those we know equally, our sentiments are different. I like to sit and pursue the current of my own thoughts without forcing conversation.

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During the rains the ground is perfectly inundated, and the roads, of necessity raised like the terraces of an ancient garden, completely grass-grown. How much I was struck by the loneliness which characterised them, with no human object but ourselves, for I doubt if I can include the abject shrinking herd-boy, who listlessly guides his flock through the tope, and gazes after us as if we were comets or flying-fish. And yet there are, I am told, not unfrequently on this deserted and dreary road more formidable visitors. Since I came here two or three tigers have made their appearance, and furnished conversation for the dinner-table. Every day you may see the traces of the wild boar, who turns up the ground as scientifically as if he were Irish born.

The appearance of the country in the twilight is so deceptive, you might, as I do, fancy it into anything, until my reverie is broken by the wild, most horrible shriek of the jackal, or perhaps the wing of the flying-fox, who wings his heavy flight to the thick plantain-trees, where he rests for the night. This station, in itself so retired, is rendered still more solitary by the want of unanimity between the inhabitants; why it is so I cannot tell, for I have never seen any of them. The two ladies did call on me on my arrival, but I requested Mrs. G. to make my apologies. Use becomes nature. What a strange effect it had on me the other day: as I sat writing in the usual sitting-room, Dr. Lamb came in

to lance the little girl's gums; the sound of a stranger's voice made me start and turn pale and red alternately—I could hardly speak for a moment. George often expresses surprise that I do not pay and receive visits; how could I? what sympathy with me could they feel, and how can I be expected to feel an interest in them?

I certainly often feel regret that Mrs. G.'s disposition inclines her oftener to censure than to praise; in one so young it soon becomes a habit not easily laid aside. One of the beauties and excellencies of Lady D'Oyly's character was that she never spoke or judged ill of others, and even where there was room for censure, she generally endeavoured to find some apology. I do not think there is anything more characteristic of a lofty nature than this.

I sometimes listen with silent dismay to the unsparing animadversions of Mrs. G., and wonder if there is to be any exception. Mrs. Grant certainly gets her share, and a certain Miss Rhind, who was here on a visit before my arrival. It shocks me to hear her speak of her mother-in-law [step-mother], lately dead, particularly as I heard at Patna, where she then resided, that she was a very gentle, amiable, and unhappy young creature, unhappy in having been induced by necessity to unite herself to a man who might have been her grandfather, and whose children treated her as an enemy. She lived, or I might say endured life for two years, and left an infant boy. I have seen her portrait, which has an expression of suppressed sorrow that brings the tears to my eyes. Her sister, Miss Abbot, still remains with Mr. Elphinston, and seems to be equally hated. Oh! what a wretched world this is!

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Shall I detail for you the story of one day here?—one will

serve for all, there is no change. I hardly know when I woke, for the whole night was a waking dream, but on first looking on my watch I find it four o'clock, and prepare to rise as softly as I can, that my ayah, who sleeps in the bathing-room, may believe me still asleep and not come in to plague me; there is a distant sound, like the tomtom accompanying the Dak—it becomes more distinct—yes, it is the Dak, and I start from my couch to look at it passing, as if by that I could learn if it brings ought for me. Oh! how we cling to hope! for what have I to expect? Yet I correct the thought, for I may hear from Catherine and James, and while two so dear, so tender in their affections, are left, I am not comfortless. But if the late arrivals had brought any English letters for me, I must have received them ten days ago, when Frank got his.

Musing over this probability, I follow anxiously the two miserable figures who can create such anxiety, until they disappear behind the mosques at the gate. There goes the chupprassy to bring the post-bag, and here will I wait his return.

The sun is just on the horizon and the first level rays fall, oh! how beautifully, on that tomb and the mango-trees it stands beneath. The painted jay with neck and wings of the most exquisite blue is perched upon it, the long, low note of minor is yet heard from the bamboo thicket. The sunbeams stealing over the glowing blossoms of the pomegranate seem to pause, as if intercepted by that magnificent stranger, the glorioso, a native of New South Wales; the leaves and stalk rise like a narrow-leafed aloe, but the flowers, like bells of frosted silver, hang so thick and taper to so nice a termination that at a distance the whole resembles one mighty flower. And there—! but now returns the chupprassy with a packet

which he gives to the sirdar-bearer to carry to Frank, I shall soon know if any share comes to me. Five, ten minutes, a quarter of an hour past; no, there is none, unless that step may be some one coming; alas! it is but the bearer calling for the little girl's bullock-carriage—and there is nothing more to hope or interest me until to-morrow. Heaven forgive me for wishing past the day only begun; just five o'clock! the sun comes on too powerfully, and as I close the blind I stop one moment to see sweet little Bessie passing. She has got her dog and a world of playthings at her feet in the gharry; her fair English countenance forms such a contrast with the dusky features of the attendants. Dear unconscious infant, what is to be *your* fate, will you live to sorrow over life, to envy the dead? Was *I* once as insensible to pain as you now are?

Having bathed and had my hair dressed, what shall I now do? Wearied in mind as much as body I can but lie down and read—first open the door, for some person knocks—only the kitmutgar with my cup of tea. Then I read on my couch till eight, when the heat forces me to leave my room, on which the sun beats with such power that the walls feel like the sides of an oven. So I wander up and down a room in the centre of the house, where breakfast is laid. After some interval of lonely musing I go to inquire for Mrs. Gouldsbury, and sit on the couch looking over the papers. She now never leaves her room till dinner, and has been lately most annoyed at the idea of Dr. Lamb quitting the station to accompany his wife to Calcutta, who was taking her children to England.

She speaks of going to Calcutta, to be confined at the house of her sister, Mrs. Mill, who lives at Bishop's College, which I remember admiring from Mrs. Cleland's. I suppose this

plan would suit George, as he speaks of going to Madras in December; indeed he cannot go sooner. Frank has repeatedly expressed his wish that I should remain here and let George go on, and George seems indifferent on the subject. Though I love Frank I don't like to stay here; the place is melancholy to me beyond measure. Though I know not what I seek in wishing to quit it, I do wish to go.

After a long conversation with Mrs. G., breakfast appears, and I return into the room where it is ready. At this hour I hardly ever eat, but sit down. George seems deeply interested by the change of ministry, and Frank by the making of a new road; being equally indifferent to both, my thoughts revert to Mrs. G.'s conversation, and her anticipated pleasure in meeting her sister and child. How desolate I felt in comparison when I thought of myself:—

‘No husband, child, or friend had I,
No partner in my misery.’

I sat, revolving it in my mind, until the humble salaam of the molly, who always brings in his basket of vegetables and fruit at breakfast, roused me. I took from him some plantains and roses. The scent of flowers has a strange effect on my mind, similar to the tones of music; it brings a flood of images before me. I cannot explain why, at that instant, the perfume of a rose should recall the idea of a September morning at home and the scenery of a favourite spot, Portstead, a small village on the romantic coast of Antrim, where my last autumn in Ireland was spent; perhaps I enjoyed it more from feeling it *was the last*, or rather felt its beauty more. I knew, too, that Niel was with a gay shooting-party on the opposite coast of Jura. . . . I returned on the 5th of May following, the day of my marriage. We took up our abode in a small cottage near the Causeway, to explore it at our

leisure. Happy, happy hours, that glided away as a dream of the morning.

There is one spot eternally fixed on my remembrance. . . . The sea-gulls were skimming the water and darting to the sky like creatures of air, and at a great distance a large American ship, with all sail spread, was entering Lough Foyle. This sight led both our thoughts to the same subject, though no word was spoken; I felt my eyes fill with tears, which Niel perceived, and said :

‘The sacrifice we must make is great, but while you, dearest Bessie, are near, the world is the same; I can be happy if you can feel content. Let us hope one day to come again and sit here.’ I could not speak.

. . . Alas! Is it of myself I speak? Was I ever so blessed, who am now so desolate? I felt like Mirza where he turned from the Genie to gaze again on the Islands of the Blessed, and saw only the long hollow valley of Bagdad. Not less was the change when some one entering aroused me from this dream, to find myself alone, in the most painful sense of the word. At that instant the solitude of my own room would have been comparative comfort, for I did not wish to expose the agitation I felt to the crowd of servants about the room. I took the paper and seemed to read till George departed to his tent and Frank to his kutcherry. Then I turned to my dressing-room but found no rest there, the bearers and ayah were folding and dusting, and had it in utter confusion, so my only refuge was Mrs. G., where I sat for some time and tried to engage my attention by making a frock for Bessie until one o’clock, when the kitmutgar brought tiffin; mine is generally pummelo and bread. .

The heat was terrible, a thunder-shower was impending but still kept off, and it was scarcely possible to breathe. Quite

exhausted I again sought my own room, which now was quiet and abandoned by my tormentors. I bathed again and having put on my dressing-gown prepared to remain and read until dinner, when my bearer presented himself at my door with two letters—and one of them from England. They had been sent all the way to Agra to Mrs. Campbell of the 21st, and now returned by the up-country Dak. How long have I been deprived of them, but no matter, I could never have received them at a more acceptable time. My dear Catherine's is dated the 9th of March, and in reply to one I wrote at sea. With what anguish I read over her anxious anticipation of a future meeting. . . . How well I remember the 9th of March, I had been invited to a ball and was very ill of fever. Catherine gives confirmation to the report of Charlotte Hart's marriage with Mr. Gough, and though I regret, I regret deeply, that such is her choice, because I think her heart was differently bestowed, since it is so, I rejoice at the hope of once more meeting one so truly dear since earliest childhood. Catherine added that she was to sail for Calcutta in May, so that in another month I may look for her arrival. Lovely and beloved Charlotte! Now shall I count the hours till we meet.

Before my letters were finished the bearer came to announce khaunna. I hurried on my clothes without feeling it was hot. I was even in charity with my ayah. I went out to drive with very different feelings from those with which I had risen from breakfast. . . . We met Mrs. Grant's landau, or rather were overtaken by it. George introduced me, and kept up a long conversation with her and two other ladies. She seems the picture of ease and happiness, very fat, very fair, and very high spirits. She had all of her carriage stowed with curly-headed, pretty children, save the space occupied by herself and friends.

We found Frank and Mrs. G. sitting outside the door and our bearers brought our chairs also. The moon was then rising and it is now shining down on my paper. . . . Why do we not follow the example of the French and devote the day to rest, the night to activity? Before the moon rose the brilliancy of the fireflies, actually in millions on the grass, over the shrubs, and especially beneath the mangoes, was not to be told, and it was beautiful to see their glow diminish, waxing fainter as the lamp of night ascended her silent path.

As I sat writing yesterday in my dressing-room I was attracted by the conversation of a visitor to Frank, who was proceeding Dak to Benares. He was recounting to George the circumstances of his delay at Rajemahl. He had been obliged to lend his personal aid in procuring interment among the ruins of the castle for the body of a lady. She was coming up the river with her husband and taken ill; she died at that spot. Her husband was too much stunned by the sudden event to make any exertion, and no native servant on such an occasion will even touch the body. He also spoke of the frightful death of Colonel Chalmers of the 41st regiment and his wife, of cholera. They were returning, I believe, to Bangalore with their daughter, a young girl, from a visit to a distant station. Both were taken ill together; only conceive such a picture of human suffering as that of Miss Chalmers, left alone in a tent with the dead bodies of her parents, far removed from all human *sympathy*, human aid being unavailing. George related another tale of woe almost as striking. Travelling to some place in the Madras Presidency through a remote country, he came up with a palkee, on the ground, without bearers. He got out and drew back the door, where a young man lay dead!

I lost part of the conversation and had not courage to resume it again with George, though I wished to know the sequel, at least if he had discovered his name or condition.

I cannot relinquish the belief that a secret prescience is often felt of approaching events. How frequently have I heard my beloved Niel, when in full enjoyment of life and health, say he felt a conviction he should die in a foreign country, that he should not find a grave where his brothers and father lay.

On Sunday the 22nd of April he had been on duty, and returned fatigued to rest where I had lain down; he resumed the subject and said he felt he was to die in India: but that his chief consolation was the knowledge that James would supply his care to me and be a father to his child: that it was natural to suppose I should marry again and might find a *better* but never a more attached husband. Who can tell what influence was *then* operating on his mind or how much he *might* have told me?

You, my dear friend, may recollect that all my life I have had a fixed belief in supernatural agency, without any dread of what has ever seemed to me a thing more to be wished than feared. *Now* I confess my confidence in that opinion has diminished, for well I know if the dead were permitted to return, he I loved so well in life would not depart voluntarily after death. He would revisit the one he clung to life for—and oh! could I now, when all living things have left me, even for one moment look upon him, I should be no more alone. Could that voice whose last accent was my name once more address me, how would it soften the dreariness of separation. But *this* I fear is not permitted.

I said I would tell you what I thought and *did* in one day, but I find I have related what I thought and felt. Another morning is almost come, yet still I linger and would do so longer, only that my light is glimmering. Little heart I have to sleep, yet must say farewell. Heaven grant the departed day may have passed more happily with you, but this I am little likely to hear, and perhaps on the calm current of your life the 23rd of September may have left no trace.

26th Sept.—I had yesterday to endure the misery of a station party as it is termed, that is, all the good people of the neighbourhood collected on the same day; indeed all seemed as if they came to suffer. How relieved I should have been could I have spent the day alone, but not wishing to become particular I had no alternative but to occupy one seat on a couch, which I think was my contribution to the general entertainment. I had a little conversation with Mr. Grant, who is a mild and pleasing man, with much information. . . . Mrs. G. seems a happy soul. The beauty of her complexion after twenty years residence here is really astonishing. Mrs. Lamb is, or has been, a pretty woman, perhaps with more mind. She is an elegant, musical, and very well educated woman, as well as an accomplished one, with a nice family to whom she devotes herself. There were two other ladies, one an inmate in Mrs. Grant's family, a Miss Dickson, a very fine-looking woman indeed, past the meridian of life. Being a single woman and still so handsome is not a little strange; I could just gather from Mrs. Gouldsbury's recital that by some reverse of fortune she was obliged to remain behind the rest of her family in India; she is in no way related to the Grants, but they show her the utmost attention and kindness. She is Irish, but happily for herself and hearers retains nothing of the justly reviled brogue. There was another female of the

same party, a *protégée* of Mrs. G.'s, whose position in society it would not be easy to determine. I asked her name and was told Miss Jean, but beyond this baptismal appellation could learn nothing, nor was I much taken with her aspect. The other lady, whose name I forgot the same moment I heard it, was just like the thousand and one ladies you meet every day, but though her name did not impress me her necklace did; it was a range of small gold elephants in exact order walking round her neck; the association of ideas with a troop of elephants round a fair lady's neck was to me so absurd I could with difficulty refrain from laughing.

Much to my happiness, after dinner driving was proposed, and I manœuvred myself into the carriage with the children.

1st October.—Mrs. Gouldsbury has decided on leaving this on the 10th. I am glad of it, the place is to me dreary beyond measure. I think too the air of the river may be of use to me. I only fear there may be delay in obtaining boats which they have delayed so long in securing. They ought to be the best judges, but lest any accident should occur I have ordered a country boat to be matted and prepared for myself.

3rd October.—Night is the time I generally open this letter. I suppose it is the cool air which relieves my head then. It weans my heart a little, too, from sorrowful musing, and though you may not find the interest you expect in what I write, yet the belief that it has been of relief to me will compensate to your kind heart. ¶ The persecution of the insects is one disadvantage; my paper, my hair, my neck is thick with them. Huge grasshoppers, three inches long, of so beautiful a green they look like delicate leaves, fluttering on my paper—with crickets of all sorts; then an enormous creature called an elephant beetle comes full flight against my candle, ex-

tinguishes it, and gives me the trouble of climbing up to relight it at the wall shade. This monster is able to walk about the table with a dessert plate and spoon laid on its back.]

I mentioned that there is a considerable manufacture of silk here; I wonder what the people of Manchester would think of the process of weaving. I was much amused, as we drove slowly by one of the villages this evening, to observe their operations. It was in the very depth of a mango tope, double rows of bamboo placed upright in the ground formed their loom, and they were in the act of walking round to let the silk thread run off on this wretched construction. Further on, there were beautiful pieces of shaded crimson silk finished and put to dry, between the stems of the coca trees. Some very old men were weaving a coarse kind of muslin under the shade of a banyan. Many of those wicker huts were so completely covered with creepers and melon blossoms, they resembled a mass of leaves and flowers. A low, and very neat bamboo paling formed an enclosure where the herds of buffalo, cows, and goats were assembled to be milked. Infant children lay on the mats at the threshold of the door sleeping with the kids. The women returning from the tank with lotus-shaped pots of water on their heads, wrapped in their peculiar drapery, their curiosity to see, and unwillingness to be seen,—all formed an interesting picture of simplicity, and excited your compassion for fellow-men even though debased.

I mused over these ideas while we drove slowly on, until two natives accosted my cousin in Hindoostanee, which for my benefit he translated. The words of the mild Hindoo were to this effect, 'Sabib, I am the man who killed my wife, I killed her with a sword.' I may spare you the further

particulars, recounted as they were with the most thorough indifference.

George speaks now of wishing to go off to Madras to effect an exchange in his station; he wishes to go to Cuddalore, which he thinks would be better for my health, and proposes my remaining in Bengal until his return. . . . If he does go off, I may as well reconcile myself to the idea of remaining all the cold season in Calcutta, but as Charlotte Hart (I cannot call her Gough) will have arrived even before I reach the presidency, I shall have the consolation of her society.

10th October.—Another week gone and no chance of boats, not one at Moorshedabad, and the only remaining hope is to borrow one from a friend of Frank's. A messenger has gone off, but this is such an uncertainty, as we do not even know if he is at home. . . .

13th October.—I think I shall now dread letters more than wish for them. I have now received all those I expected after they had gone to Muttra; these are in reply to the first I wrote on my arrival in Calcutta full of hope and happiness.

22nd October.—Still at Maldah where I am likely to remain, as Mrs. Gouldsbury's plan of proceeding to Calcutta is quite given up; indeed, latterly I despaired of it, as the means resorted to were so little likely to produce the effect required. George says he must go, Mrs. G. still intends to visit her sister after her confinement, so here I must continue for a time.

The cold has set in in the evenings and early morning, but still the heat of the day is undiminished. Cold never gave me the same sensation at home; it is a cold damp atmosphere; if you close the doors you feel almost suffocated, if they are open, you meet the moist current of air all round. You can

hardly fancy anything more comfortless than returning from your drive by the dim light into a room like a barn, for however lofty and expensively furnished, the want of drapery gives a cold, bare appearance. The mats, too, badly supply the pre-existing idea of comfort connected with an English carpet and graceful folds of curtains.

I felt much interested in two young people who stopped a day or two here on their way to a remote station towards the Nepaul country. He is an officer in the Company's service and she a pretty elegant English girl. He about twenty-three, she nineteen, I should guess. . . . There was more character in her than you generally find in the very young. There was also some similarity in our situations. She had married one she had long loved and they seemed so very, very happy, so wrapped up in each other, and even more attached by the recent loss of their infant, that you could not help feeling interested in them. They came up the river in a country boat, and though obviously brought up in that rank of life which commands convenience and luxuries, I felt quite pleased with the spirit and gaiety with which she disregarded the inconvenience and deprivations she was subjected to.

As I sat at dinner opposite to her, I forget what was the subject of conversation, but something was said which evidently touched her feelings. He looked at her and her eyes kindled with such a beautiful lustre, and her cheek, generally pale, glowed like vermilion. Oh! how well I understood that look, its mute eloquence. I felt my eyes fill with tears when I remembered how soon her happy countenance might be changed to sorrow. It is extraordinary how soon a corresponding chord of feeling produces intimacy. I felt better acquainted with her in three days than I should have been with many others in a year, and so sorry to see her go off.

27th October.—Another English letter and another sorrow : the death of my dear affectionate friend Mrs. Hart. Catherine had mentioned her illness, but not in a way to prepare me for this sad event. Poor Charlotte little knows the intelligence that awaits her. When I think of her, I ought not to consider my own loss, great though it is. . . . How unfortunate does Charlotte's absence seem at this crisis. If I had been at home I should have gone to these dear helpless girls and know not anything would have been more gratifying to my heart than the endeavour to repay to them any part of her care of myself.

Oh ! if the high-minded Eliza had been spared—but this is disputing the wisdom of the Almighty ; I must believe that the faithful devotion of their mother, her piety and virtue will obtain for their helpless infancy, the aid and protection of Our Father which art in Heaven. Who says, so justly ; ‘ Man's necessity is God's opportunity ’ ? Poor Charlotte ! I now dread our approaching meeting.

28th October.—I felt so truly afflicted after the intelligence of yesterday, I was unfit for society. Though George knew Mrs. Hart as a boy, it was only as such, and he felt nothing of the distress I experienced.

2nd November.—I have been very busy the last few days. Mrs. Gouldsbury is the happy mother of a fine boy, very unexpectedly . . .

Next morning [30th October], George went off by daylight. I cannot possibly express the sensation I had when he left the room at night and I felt I was utterly friendless. Ten thousand times more lonely and heart-sick than at the first moment of my bereavement ; then I had many affectionate friends, but there was something in the gloom and loneliness

about here that I could not bear up against . . . I lay on the couch listening to the only sound, the ticking of the clock on the chimney-piece, I believe for hours. How I envied George's calm and passionless temperament, he just bid me good-night as usual and was gone. It was near morning before I went to bed; I sleep now in Mrs. G.'s dressing-room, wishing to be near her at night, and I felt so chilled I could not sleep.

All the next day and the present, I have been very uncomfortable, with pain in my limbs and shivering. This I am not surprised at, as the women are all night going through the room, and nothing will induce them to shut a door after them, so I lie with the cold air from the verandah on me. The expected nurse-tender arrived to-day, and as she will enter on the duties of her office, mine cease, and I expect soon to get back to my apartment, which Frank now occupies. What curious people these women are, and oh! what tongues! Being in such demand here, they carry about the news and scandal of a whole district. I should not like this lady to have anything in her power to say of me.

I really felt so miserable all day I knew not what to do. Having no apartment to go to, I got the bearer to bring me a bottle of hot water, and rolled myself up in shawls on the couch in the drawing-room, where Mrs. Lamb, like a good kind creature, came and sat with me for a long time. I had been so unaccustomed to hear anything like friendly conversation, and at this moment was so nervous, that I could not help bitterly weeping. She sent Dr. Lamb to see me, who ordered me some calomel and to go to bed and keep myself very warm lest a return of ague should visit me. This was no easy matter, but I did go to bed and waited long for the nurse to have an interval of leisure, to get me some warm

drink. I asked all the servants in vain; they either did not, or would not, understand me. I then called my own bearer, and he alas! brought in a lighted candle. My only resource was to send for Frank, who was in the next room, who, when he understood my difficulties, made me a tumbler of wine and water hot, also some sherbet, and after doing all he could by telling the nurse to come occasionally to me, returned to Mrs. G.'s room.

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Next morning according to Dr. Lamb's advice I lay in bed, and Mrs. Lamb came and sat with me. The more I saw of her my regret increased that I had not known her sooner, as she was to go off in a few days to Calcutta. I could not refrain from expressing it to her, adding that I knew not how I should pass the time until Mrs. G. went to Calcutta. I was even further pleased by Mrs. Lamb's candour. She said: 'As we have conversed confidentially, allow me to say you are to blame for not receiving the acquaintance of Mrs. Grant; she is a most warm-hearted, benevolent woman, and has made many advances which you have rejected. Do not be offended if I say, that we have all a place to fill in society and you are neglecting yours. I can easily believe that it is more agreeable to you to separate yourself from the pursuits of others and dwell on your own thoughts. If I lost my dear husband, I should feel as you do, but would not think myself justified in acting so. You must soon leave this retired station, and be placed where you will feel it necessary to conform to the habits of others; would it not be wise in you to begin here, that use may lessen your reluctance?'

I felt every word she spoke to be truth and felt heartily obliged, assuring her the first use I should make of my recovery was to go and return Mrs. Grant's visit, but that

really in addition to the habit of staying alone that had grown upon me, a prejudice against Mrs. Grant had been impressed on my mind; I had been led to think she was not amiable. Mrs. Lamb took up her cause warmly, saying she well knew how this idea had originated, therefore she almost insisted I should go and judge with my own eyes. That very evening I got up, and was dressing to come and sit in Mrs. Gouldsbury's room, when the ayah said, Mrs. Grant's tonjin was coming through the compound. Hitherto I had always made an escape into my own room on such intimation, but resolving to benefit by Mrs. Lamb's lecture I went into the room. They both seemed rather surprised to see me, but in a visit of that kind you soon become familiar. She expressed regret to see me looking so ill, and said the constant confinement to the house was enough, in such a climate, to destroy my constitution. I made the best apology I could, and said I meant to go out more frequently. To-morrow if I am able I will go and see her.

7th November.—According to my resolve I went to call at Mrs. Grant's and found her busy working, which few ladies in India ever think of. After sitting a long time, I went to see Mrs. Lamb, who goes off in a few days, to show her I had profited by her counsel. She seemed the picture of grief, everything almost was packed up and the pretty bungalow in confusion, but yet she strove to be cheerful. What a trial to leave her husband for two years!—poor soul, I do feel for her.

In the evening, which was cool and delightful, Mrs. Grant drove to the door to see Mrs. G., and finding me sitting alone in the hall, low enough, she insisted that I should go out and drive with her, to which I consented, and afterwards went to her house to drink tea. I felt extremely pleased

with Mr. Grant's conversation. He was preparing to visit the Nepaul hills, for a little cold weather recreation, and to take sketches. . . . What a pity that he and Frank do not meet oftener, he is the sort of person whose society must be an advantage. Mrs. G. and himself express much regard for Frank, and desire to be intimate; they seem less partial to her. Mrs. Grant in speaking of Mrs. Lamb's excellent qualities added, '*She* never speaks ill of the absent,' with an emphasis implying there was some one else who did.

Among other interesting views Mr. G. had some of the ruined city of Gour. . . . It is seven miles off, but the bund or ditch enclosing it extends to this station, and I believe the space that bund surrounds must be many miles. It was once the chief city in Bengal, the regal residence, and has been abandoned seven hundred years from its unhealthiness; and two thousand seven hundred years before the Christian era it flourished in splendour. . . . All traces of its early days are gone, for it was probably verging to decay while the inhabitants of Britain were yet wandering in forests, celebrating the unholy rites of Druidical superstition. How marvellous it is to turn back on the ravages of time. The same idea struck me almost on my arrival on viewing the island of Sagur, now thick with forest and impenetrable jungle, the most to be dreaded of any place in India from the number and ferocity of the tigers. A small settlement had been attempted on it, and in clearing away the matted brushwood and forest trees, they were found rooted on brick foundations. Where these extend, or when it rose from the waters in the pomp of an eastern city, are facts which alike place conjecture at defiance. It now forms an asylum for natives who have lost caste and congregated in villages on the shore. The interior is quite unknown, except as the haunt of birds and

beasts of prey; still (there is an annual fair held, where vast numbers of Hindoos assemble to offer sacrifice, sometimes of a child, though every exertion has been made by Government, even to retaining a party of Sepoys there to prevent it.) I am strongly impressed by the idea of the world being very much older than we date its duration. When we must look so far back for the period of this city's rise and decay, how distant must be the day of its foundation; a much earlier period than the erection of the pyramids or that of Thebes.

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How I envy Mr. Grant his tour to the Nepaul hills; the climate there is quite cold, and it is amusing to see a person in India trying to prepare a wardrobe for cold weather. Mrs. Grant is contriving a most responsible dressing gown, silk wadded with cotton, which has all the warmth and less weight than cloth; the remaining difficulty is a pair of warm gloves, and I am going to try if I can recollect how I used to knit them for the children at home, on a hook, and have promised to take my work and dine with Mrs. Grant. I really begin to feel pleasure in his conversation. Oh! how many and great are the advantages of a cultivated mind, what a light taste sheds on every object, and what an advantage to a man with a family. Yet in this country much of its benefit is lost,—the climate compels you to part from your children. Mrs. Grant is now preparing to send her eldest girl home with Miss Dickson. Three of her daughters and their eldest son are already there. The girls come out here next year, which event is ardently anticipated by their parents. I found that the Grants were intimately acquainted with a sister of Sir Charles D'Oyly, himself and many members of the family. One of Mrs. Grant's girls is called after her, and she

lived with them a long time after coming to the country, and estimates the whole party highly, so I felt quite at home, and delighted to converse with any one who knew and valued those beloved friends. Mrs. Grant told me many circumstances before unknown of them, particularly of the first Lady D'Oyly.

13th November.—I received some very kind letters from Muttra, from my cousins the Campbells and George Lawrence; the latter I sincerely love next to James, and his affection for me seems little inferior. Mrs. C. is very anxious I should go to Agra to see them, particularly as my journey to Madras is deferred. When I went to live at Patna, they most warmly invited me to make their house my home, which from Niel's regard for his cousin I might have done if I had not gone to Lady D'Oyly. They now renew their invitation and George seems to like them so much and wishes me to come, I almost regret that I have made other arrangements,—especially as George points out that from Agra I could much easier meet James hereafter than from Madras, and *this* is beyond a question my ultimate object. Every day adds proofs that only with him I can hope for comfort; certainly if anything delays George's [*i.e.* her brother's] return I will go to Agra, in the meantime my wisest plan is to go to Calcutta. Here I am out of the way of everything, and when the river subsides the difficulty of leaving will be considerable. I can stay with Charlotte until I determine on my future arrangements.

Mrs. Gouldsbury is quite well and able to go about. She speaks of going to Calcutta at the time Mrs. Grant does. I received letters from George enclosing others from James, who was then on his way from the Nilgherry Hills and, thank God, quite recovered. . . . George was staying with Jane Allan, who very warmly invited me to return to her, and had also visited Mrs. Mill at Bishop's College, who gave a similar

invitation which George recommended me to accept, as the situation of Bishop's College and the retirement of a clergyman's family in itself was desirable; in which opinion I concurred, supposing that I reach Calcutta before Charlotte Gough; for however kind Jane was, their house was ever a round of company, and there I could not expect the mode of life most proper and most desirable.

23rd November.—I feel almost miserable, I quite despair of leaving this place, and it is so gloomy and comfortless my heart sinks. Mrs. G. is the whole day in her own room, I scarcely ever see her and there is something strange in her manners and habits. If I go to her room I find the door bolted, which seems like an intimation not to intrude. They had settled to go off on the 28th and ordered boats, then changed their intentions and countermanded them. I long since engaged a country boat to prevent disappointment, which lies at the ghaut. Mrs. Grant goes off on the 1st and in ten days longer the river will be too low for boats. I am absolutely miserable here and suffer so much from the cold and damp; were you but to see me you would really pity me. Mrs. G. never leaves her room, where she sits with the nurses and children, having a good charcoal fire. I generally cover myself up in my fur tippet and shawl in the evening and read, write, or walk about the rooms. Such an evening as *I spend every night, you never spent in your life.* Mrs. G.'s ayah generally comes for her tea, and I sit alone in a large room at a large table surrounded by servants. Not one in the house speaks English, as George took my kitmutgar to Calcutta, promising to send him back immediately, and he was my only medium of communication with all the others. My ayah was discovered to be a thief, so she was sent off, and if I wished for another here I could not get one. I have suffered such

violent attacks of spasms, at night particularly—I suppose from the cold—I did certainly fancy myself dying, and not a soul within my reach but my old bearer; the sitting-rooms are in the centre of the house, the bedrooms form wings. I occupy one side, Mrs. G. the other, and to add to my distress the lamps do not burn, the cold congeals the oil, and pain, solitude and darkness are my sole companions, not counting the musk rats which come in such numbers when the light goes out; they actually run in troops over me in bed and make me so nervous, I frequently cry half the night.

26th November.—When Mrs. Grant came here this evening I was regularly in bed to keep myself warm; she seemed much amused at finding me so. She urged me much to go to Calcutta at the time she does, which I begin to think is really my best plan. We shall be about fifteen or eighteen days on the river and before that time the *Warren Hastings* will have arrived to a certainty. It is quite folly to depend my movements on the Gouldsbury's, who vacillate every hour. The *Dak* just arrived brings me three letters from Dinapore and my heart reproached me on seeing my dear, kind Blackwell's hand, for I have so long neglected to write, I did not deserve a letter. But in my last I begged Lady D'Oyly to tell him that I suffered so much lately, I had been unable to write. What an effect on the feelings an affectionate letter sometimes will have. He seems so amazed at George leaving me behind, and enters so warmly into my feelings about being with James. He tells me of his studies and entreats me to rouse myself and direct my mind to any pursuit or acquirement as an occupation for my thoughts. Asks me if the spirit of poetry is gone for ever! and if I will write for him anything, saying—'It will enable you to forget the past, which you must at least try to do.'

What a contrary effect his letter had, bringing to my mind the happiness of the days in which we were first associated, our pleasant evening drives, and all the sympathy and kindness he watched me with during my residence at Patna. It was late before these letters arrived, and his in particular excited my feelings so much that I could not sleep, so I began to write to him, but felt haunted by those two lines of poor Byron—

‘ Oh thou that tell’st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet ’

Finding I could not write a letter, I began on another sheet of paper the following lines:—

‘ Oh thou, that tell’st me to forget,
It cannot be, it is not yet
That cold forgetfulness can bless
My wounded spirit’s bitterness ;
For what can stem the tide of woe
Of tears that wait not leave to flow ?
What charm can bind the gushing eye
Or lull the heart’s deep agony ?’ . . .

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Formerly I could express my feelings better in verse than in prose, now I can hardly write two lines clearly. And this often beguiled many hours of illness and solitude—sleepless nights in particular. It was at all events a very harmless amusement, if the mind was weary of the world, though not a very profitable one—at least, so I have tried to convince myself when half ashamed of the propensity.

VI

DECEMBER 1ST—15TH, 1827

1st December.—*On the Maldah River.*—I went to sleep on board my bamboo boat last night previous to my voyage, for I can call it nothing less. . . . I had to embark in a country boat so small I could hardly stand upright—indeed, I could not; but go I must, even in this boat, rather than wait. Besides my earnest desire to get to Calcutta, the inducement of Mrs. Grant being on the river at the same time was a great one; to have any recourse in case of sickness or accident, I regarded as a most fortunate circumstance, being still dreadfully at a loss for the man George took with him to Calcutta.

I think I never before felt so low and heartsick as last night when I took possession of my floating habitation, for the first time in my life utterly alone, without a living soul who could understand one word I spoke. It was not in human nature to repress the sad remembrance and contrast of situation *then* with the time on which I first embarked on the Ganges, accompanied by Niel and surrounded by every comfort.

The only servant I could bear near me was his old bearer, and, apathetic as they usually are, this poor creature seemed so careful about me, it almost appeared he understood what was passing in my mind. He had been at work all the

evening removing my things and arranging them the best way he could imagine. To give you an idea of such a boat, can you fancy one divided in the centre, the stern-part roofed and covered with matting, exactly like a little hut in a boat? Some of the servants sleep on the top, others on the deck with the dandies, but my old man had separated by mats a little spot at the door (which door is a mat) of my apartment to sleep on, that he might be near me, and there he sat beside my bed, with his knees up to his mouth, his arms embracing them. It was severely cold, a frosty wind. He had spread on my sheets an old Indian shawl to keep me warm; he had a kettle of water boiling on deck, and immediately brought a bottle of hot water to place at my feet. A box of river stores which had accompanied me from Dinapore, of wine, brandy, etc., of which I had thought no more, he had laid by at Maldah, and I silently watched him searching until he laid hold of a little bottle of port wine, which he carried off, and presently returned with my little silver jug with some warmed wine and water made very nice with ginger and nutmeg, as he used to see Niel prepare it for me at night on the river. He then folded my things which I had left on the floor in recklessness, and pointing to his lair near me, with many salaams departed to it, where I soon heard him enjoying his hookah.

All this poor creature's attentions rendered my spirits more low. Though I repeatedly said, 'I will not think, I must not think!' my tears fell faster and faster, until I laid my head on the table and sobbed and wept myself into a state of exhaustion. At last, seeing it was near one o'clock, I rose up and lifted the mat at the side which served the purpose and place of a window-blind, and *felt*, as I *ever* do, the bright, untroubled face of nature calm my feelings.

An Indian village, though simple in the extreme, is always pretty in effect from its close adherence to nature, which may be rude but is ever graceful. I looked again over these lowly habitations and thought that each was a home within whose precincts the blessed affections and relationships of life might find exercise. There slept parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, living too, perhaps, beneath the same trees where their parents were born. All these had *hopes*, *fears*, and *excitements*, while for me there were *none*; hope was no more! my solitude was entire! Then I thought of England, of friends *there*, of childhood, and how inexplicable seemed the mystery of life! One hour bursts the bonds of love, the glittering hopes that have been our object vanish. The fond heart, the trusting bosom is cold, and we call it death. . . . This world is but a part of His work. How much may remain that we want faculties to comprehend! Perhaps the soul after death may enjoy renewed powers and more lofty perceptions. Strange, wondrous names—Eternity, Infinity! when the very changes of *this* life, the vicissitudes of this world, are so incomprehensible. *Here on this spot once* a splendid city extended herself, and the varied riches of India were combined at the will of one man. Here again is the peasant's hut, whose hand weaves the cloth that covers him, and whose simple husbandry rears the rice or gourds that feed him; when *he too* is gone hence, *what* will succeed in the chain of events?

I read one chapter in Isaiah, whose lofty imagery was suited to the tone of my feelings, and looking once on the beautiful sketch of Niel's grave, which Sir Charles D'Oyly did for me and I placed in my Bible, I undressed and slept undisturbed till near daylight, when the motion of the boat told me we were sailing onward. I first thought, 'I will take a last look at Maldah;' again I said, 'Wherefore should I?'

‘No fond remembrance claims me here :
These walls no lingering hopes endear.’

Yet I thought of dear Frank and prayed God to bless *him* and *his*, although regretful that he had not made a different marriage, and that I could not sincerely extend my love and respect to her. But why give separate names to the same sentiment? for when did love exist without respect, its very essence?

Before seven o'clock the old bearer came to my matted door and informed me that Mrs. Grant ‘sent her best compliments, and that breakfast would be ready at eight’; further, he added, that she would be in much pain if I did not come to her boat, as she would stop for me at a certain ghaut. As it yet wants half an hour of the time, I am sitting on the floor endeavouring to write on a trunk. However, having yet my hair to dress, I will bid you farewell until to-morrow.

2nd December.—I found Mr. Grant waiting on the bank at the appointed place with a chatta to conduct me to their budgerow. How much at ease old residents are in their movements. Though their boat contained a large party, four little beds in each corner of the first room, yet all was so arranged you saw no more confusion than in a sitting-room on shore. Breakfast was ready, and Mrs. Grant said she made it a rule her visitors *must* eat; but this was rather agreeable than otherwise from the keen air of the river. Afterwards the bearers each took charge of their respective children, either to play with them or put them to sleep, and Mrs. Grant and Miss Dickson commenced their needlework, the tailors first having received their orders. Mr. Grant resumed a drawing he was finishing, and I was the only one unemployed. It was such a time since I had been in the society of ladies, I almost

forgot work, so I begged for some employment, and chose to mend some fine lace, intended for a dress of Mrs. G.'s.

I soon got deep in Celtic lore with Mr. Grant. . . . I learned from him that there is almost an uninterrupted jungle up the river until terminating in a tremendous forest which skirts the Nepaul hills, and only passable at certain seasons and for a very limited period; the air is deadly to European life at other times. The inhabitants differ in every respect from those of the plains; they are a brave and energetic people, eating the cow and drinking wine (if it comes in their way), and they dress in a woollen plaid, exactly like that worn by the Grampian shepherds.

The morning passed pleasantly away, and I found that, unlike most Indian ladies, Mrs. Grant never lay down to sleep. After dinner at an early hour, the evening being cool and refreshing, we went to the top of the boat and enjoyed the sunset. Soon after tea I returned with Mr. Grant to my own boat, having promised Mrs. G. to be with her again in the morning. She added: 'It is a treat for Mr. G. to find any one to talk to him of the Highlands, and of his favourite Gaelic songs.'

I found my old bearer, like a dog keeping watch for my return. He had arranged my toilet, and in his wisdom and sympathy laid a book by my hairbrushes, but as this was only a lithographic map of the river I felt it would not animate me much to trace my former progress. I dismissed him and again took my seat on the morah by my couch, thinking over the past day. It recalled to me an observation, of Shenstone's I believe, that he never looked at a map of the world and remembered that even the smallest speck contained noble and cultivated minds that he could never meet or hear of, without regret. . . .

When Mr. Grant walked to my boat with me, he said the place we were then at was infested with tigers. He had seen four killed in the same morning there. While I was undressing the frightful cries of the jackals were quite depressing, and rats without number were running above, below and through my room. While I have light I don't mind them, but in the dark I really become so nervous at the idea of their getting into my bed, I cannot rest, so I made the bearer light an additional lamp for fear of accidents. After being asleep some time, I was wakened by a loud and horrible roar *in the boat*; my heart ceased to beat. Infinitely was I relieved to find it was only a jackal, which had followed the scent of some mess of the dandies, got entangled in the ropes and matting of the boat, and uttered this dire cry on the mangie approaching with a light. After this alarm I could not again compose myself, and about an hour after my horror was renewed by low and distant growling, which I well knew must be a tiger. They seemed to be traversing the banks, as sometimes it sounded close to the boat, again at a distance. I heard the dandies busy in kindling a large fire, which I believe they generally do to keep them off, and shuddered at the idea of the frail defence afforded by the *matting* of my boat, which was so close to the bank a man could spring into it. I thought as I lay trembling there what a helpless creature woman was, yet I know not what the most resolute man could have done in my situation. I tried to fortify myself with the remembrance that the eye of Omnipotence was upon me. . . . I slept no more that night, and was well pleased when morning light restored some degree of security, and gladly departed to Mrs. Grant's boat.

4th December.—When I went to her budgerow I did not need to tell of my alarms, for I looked so pale and ill she

kindly made me lie down on her bed, where I amused myself with one of her sweet little boys, a lovely creature, reminding me so much of the dear children at home. He had such a head as painters assign to Cupids and angels, such exquisite curling yellow hair, tinged with gold in the light. I could not resist taking off one of those Orient curls to place along with those of my pets. He quite attached himself to me and called me his 'Aunty Bessie.' I could not repress the thought of what a blessing would such a tie have been to me, and how aggravated was my double loss.

5th December.—We entered the great river to-day. Here the dandies always come to ask for money to make an offering to their god, to ensure safety on the voyage.

I well remembered the spot, but would not look from the window, lest I should see anything I had witnessed before under happier circumstances: and resolving not to intrude my feelings on those who seemed anxious to make me comfortable, I resolved if possible to govern them.

8th and 9th December.—The wind has been against us for the last two days. . . . Last night Mrs. G. was taken suddenly and violently ill. . . . I sat with Miss Dickson in her room until she was composed to sleep and ease. As we sat together she made some observation on the earlier events of her life; while Mrs. G.'s ayah was combing my hair, she said hers had turned suddenly before she was twenty-five. How various and unlooked for are the vicissitudes of life from the cradle to the grave with *some*, while others pursue a calm and untroubled path. She was remarkably cheerful, and when I learned *what* her trials had been, her strength of mind seemed equally surprising.

She was the daughter of a clergyman and brought up in independent circumstances—I before mentioned her appearance, she must have been beautiful when a girl—the eldest of three daughters. She was engaged to be married and the day fixed, when the death of the gentleman changed bridal festivity into mourning. This event was shortly followed by the death of her mother, by which the charge of her younger sisters devolved on her. Her only brother went to India, and next her father died. Her brother then wished his sisters to come out, and though the eldest had, since the death of her destined husband, avoided society, it seemed necessary she should sacrifice her private feelings and take charge of her sisters. They arrived in India, and her brother had connected himself with a mercantile house there into which her fortune was placed. Her younger sisters married, and one of them soon returned home.

She lived with the other, and often and often might have been well married, but seemed determined never to form a second engagement. After living about seven years in India, the house in which her brother was a partner failed, and she lost everything she possessed. Her brother-in-law became so ill they were obliged to go off to Europe, and really had not the means of taking her along with them. It was at this time she became acquainted with Mrs. Grant.

Not one person in a thousand could have resisted the accumulated distress she experienced during her residence with her sister. She had returned once to England with a child of hers and made the voyage to India again alone, and many, many times had to go up and down the Ganges to her sisters as they required her assistance. But notwithstanding all these trials I never once heard her complain; it ought to be a lesson to me!

Our position last night was in a beautiful spot; my little boat was secured to the trunk of an immense banyan tree which appeared almost to grow out of the water. As I passed from Mrs. Grant's budgerow to it under a high bank the moon was shining full, and the scene of our little fleet was very interesting. The dandies had finished their repast, but sat round their little fires enjoying their hookah, or singing with the appearance of excitement and fun, very rare among natives, but these are certainly the happiest caste or tribe in India. I hardly ever saw one of the others laugh. They do work very hard, and at this season, after being up to the middle in water in the morning, how they bear the intense heat of the day is wondrous; but they are always animated and ready for anything. They are reported to be excellent thieves, which their itinerant life gives full scope for. The morning rarely finds them on the scene of last night's depredation. My crew will not rob my boat, but they will Mrs. Grant's without hesitation.

11th December.—*Kishnagar*.—As I sat at the window this morning I was surprised to see my kitmutgar come on board and present, with many salaams, a parcel of letters; he was on his way to Maldah, and seeing our boats found mine out.

I surely am peculiarly unfortunate, every reed on which I lean for support pierces my soul. But who could have looked for *this* intelligence, or can I really believe she is gone,—my dear, lovely Charlotte? The long-hoped-for *Warren Hastings* has at length arrived. She died at sea in August. I feel almost stupefied, and repeat to myself, 'Dead! Dead!' Death seems to have taken possession of the world,

of mine at least; only three months after her mother! But oh! what was the cause of this tragedy? Who had she near her, and is there not even a trace of where she lies? My dearest Charlotte! For what *now* am I going to Calcutta, or to *whom*?

Here are letters from George, but I cannot read them or any others, nor can I even write. Oh! can I ever hope, believe, or trust again? Everything seems a dream about me. I may as well arrest the shadow of the departing sun or call the hues of the rainbow permanent, as anchor any hope on the shifting sands of human expectation.

12th December.—Nothing can exceed the kindness and sympathy of Mrs. Grant on this sad occasion. I am truly sensible of it, and try to bear it as firmly as I can. I now feel myself indeed alone, and fear anything which, by affecting my health, may increase my difficulties. What to do I know not. If I had remained with Lady D'Oyly I might easily have gone to Agra, and there James, on a short leave, might have met me.

George's plans seem more undecided than ever; I need not depend mine on him. Mrs. Grant had a long conversation with me to-night; she expressed herself as deeply feeling for a young woman, so unprotected. I cannot express the pang that touched me when she said: 'You cannot remain unmarried in India, without a home and protector. You may consider me unfeeling for pressing it on you, but as a single woman you must be miserable; whereas as a married one if you were not happy, you might be tranquil. The protection of your brothers is, from their profession, uncertain, and unless you can make up your mind to follow the advice I offer, you ought to return at once to England.' Heaven knows! the latter is the preferable alternative, and if the

Royal George has not sailed I shall gladly go home with Captain Reynolds, who is well known to my family. If anything can afford me comfort now it is the affection of Catherine and her children. Here my existence is a blank.

‘With every ray of hope destroyed,
Without a *wish* to gild the gloom.’

In one of George’s letters he said he had settled I should go to Bishop’s College on arriving, as Mrs. Allan’s house was full of company. This is certainly additionally annoying, for the misery of going among strangers is indescribable with my present feelings.

We arrived at Chinsurah on the evening of the 12th. . . . Mrs. Grant went on shore to see Mrs. Lamb, who was staying there with her brother or Mrs. Sieveright. I felt it was more than I could bear, however I might like to meet Mrs. Lamb again. I remained alone waiting her return from that very spot so lately endeared by the happiest circumstances. *There* were the high trees we had so often loitered under; the house and garden of Colonel Tidy, *now* inhabited by some other commandant: the parade-ground which I so often watched to catch the first view of his figure returning; the quickened step, if he saw me waiting—all returned like the changes of a dream. How glad I felt now to be alone, to think, to weep without restraint.

Everything announces here the vicinity of Calcutta. Baggage-boats on the river, hackneys and coolies on the bank, the pretty country-house of the Governor at Barrackpore, told me I was soon to encounter again the strife of a large society. Alas! under what circumstances. We reached the Champaul ghaut where I had embarked one year since except a few

days. My bearer had all in readiness, so I had nothing to do. I sat gazing at the very stage on which I had seen Niel stand last, his dress, his very attitude before me. At length I felt I must rouse myself, on receiving a message from Mrs. Grant begging to speak with me. She told me I must not leave her that day, but spend it at the house of a friend where she was engaged; next morning I could drive to the College and let my boat and servants go on. This I assented to: my heart sunk at the idea of encountering strangers just then. I hoped a night's rest might compose my feelings, which were so agitated.

Mrs. G. was to occupy the house of a Highland friend, a Captain Forbes, who would take up *his* residence with a bachelor companion. He came on board and, after the ceremony of introduction, proposed Mrs. G. going off to the house as his carriage was waiting, and the rest of the party to follow with Miss Dickson at leisure. So we three went away, and Captain Forbes, after conducting Mrs. G. over the house, of which he reserved but one room for his books and drawings, said, as he might be in our way, he would go off and return in the evening to conduct us to the house where he was to live with Mr. Gordon, who, I believe, is one of the partners in the house of Mackintosh and Co. This young man was an early acquaintance of Mrs. G. and very prepossessing indeed. He was in the Engineers and seemed, as they generally are, very highly educated and clever.

There was only a small party at the house of Mr. Gordon. During dinner, my bearer returned from Bishop's College with a note from Mrs. Mill, saying she would send her carriage for me next morning, bringing me also letters from Dinapore which had been lying there some days; among these were

European letters, and I know not how many pages, closely written, from Fenton, deploring my insensibility and so forth. He seems determined to write me into compassion ; if he, or any other, could but see my heart and believe that the very name of marrying again turns my blood cold, he or they would cease to increase my real unhappiness. But this is one of the prominent miseries of my unprotected situation. After dinner, when Mrs. Grant was sitting by me in the drawing-room, she said : ‘ Mr. — is quite captivated by you, and has been making a thousand inquiries where you are going and when I will see you again.’ ‘ Oh ! ’ I said, ‘ in charity don’t speak of any more suitors, but help me to get quit of those who beset me elsewhere.’

As I have mentioned before, the evening is very brief here : dinner is concluded about nine, and after the ladies have left the room about a quarter of an hour, the parties break up. I felt very tired and thankfully went to bed, where I had at least bodily rest, though little sleep. By gunfire little Charlie was by my bed insisting on coming in to his ‘ Auntie Bessie.’

Mrs. Grant promised to come and see me as soon as possible, and begged me often and kindly to support my spirits and let her know what I had decided on doing. She had met Mrs. Mill and believed her to be clever and well-informed, but knew nothing more. At all events she requested, whenever it was possible, I would come to her, adding, ‘ I require your assistance in various matters.’ I could not help shedding tears afresh when Mrs. Mill’s carriage was announced, and another moment saw me on the road to Garden Reach.

VII

DECEMBER 16TH, 1827—APRIL 2ND, 1828

THE first glance at the lady of the house made me even more sad, from the indescribable influence of first impressions. She was many years older than Mrs. Gouldsbury, and as many shades darker, yet she was well bred and conversable, and seemed very affectionate to her sister. On reaching the drawing-room I saw a lady, a Mrs. Rose, one of the passengers by the *Warren Hastings*. She was a guest there until her marriage with a Mr. Rhind, brother of the lady who preceded me at Maldah. This was to me very interesting, as I might thereby obtain some information relative to my beloved Charlotte. Mrs. Rose was certainly no beauty, but had a fine figure and some manner. My unuttered thought was—‘I wonder why people marry after thirty-five.’ As Mrs. Mill conducted me to my room she gave me this information, and I believe I expressed something of the kind. She said it was an old attachment, and this altered the case.

At dinner I met Mr. Mill. He seemed very unlike my beau ideal of a genius, or even a man of high attainments; his figure and physiognomy were alike unprepossessing. I thought—‘All my preformed ideas are at fault if you are indeed a man of noble and enlarged mind.’ When dinner was concluded some little bustle in the verandah announced an arrival, and the name of Dr. Rhind excited my attention.

I felt interested to see one who had been loved in spite of time and change; but when I turned, my astonishment was extreme. The figure who entered was really more like Caliban than anything I had ever before laid mine eyes on. It would be vain to attempt any description—the swain being deaf, blind of one eye, and about five feet high. However, the parties seeming delighted with each other, I accepted Mrs. Mill's invitation to stroll on the bank of the river, and left them. She observed my surprise at his 'outward man,' and began some apologetic account of all his good qualities, and also mentioned his sister. The ladies, it appeared, were rather at variance, and it was a feud of many years' standing. Miss Rhind, however, was coming to Calcutta to be present at the wedding. I told Mrs. Mill of the aversion her sister seemed to have taken to her, and rather commiserated Mrs. Rose with such a relative and inmate. Mrs. M. defended her, and I, knowing nought of either, was quite content to forget them all.

On my return to the drawing-room we found Dr. Rhind gone and his place filled by some of the gentlemen of the Institution. There was also an additional lady, the wife of one of the professors, second in place to Mr. Mill and Mr. Homes; also three others, but of what grade I know not, one being quite as black as my satin slipper, the other rather equivocal in complexion; there was a Dane and a young English—*boy* I *should* have said, only he seemed to expect consideration as a *man*. I have not room for the others here; and on Mrs. Rose making room on a couch near her I sat down, and we commenced some of the preliminary common-places. Her manner was very frank and conversation lively and unrestrained, though 'she seemed ill at ease from some cause; and after questioning me how *I* liked India began a hearty condemnation of everything connected therewith,

making comparisons to the advantage of the West Indies where she had passed several years; and these I had heard often made before. Of course she knew not the language and had not an earthly friend, the gentleman residing in Calcutta and unable to remove any of the difficulties which strangers suffer so severely from, and which old residents entirely forget. She was of course under the guidance of Mrs. Mill, who was a complete Indian, both in nature and practice, and quite a stranger to English feelings, though she had been at school there. Mrs. Rose so pitifully bewailed her torment with ayahs and mosquitoes that I could not help laughing, while I admitted how real the evil was.

I told her it was in her own power to free herself from one of her miseries by banishing the ayahs, and that after a few fevers the mosquitoes might take a disrelish to her, but in the meantime I recommended her endurance 'of all things,' as it was quite vain to convince any one who had lost the perception of these grievances, how much those suffered to whom they were new. Mrs. Mill could no more exist without an ayah and her attendants than she could become a bird or fish! and I have observed it is seldom prudent to depart from the general beaten track *openly*; it seems like drawing a line between ourselves and others. It is quite enough to *feel* the difference, if it exists, without producing it to observation.

Mr. and Mrs. Mill are very musical: she plays delightfully, he sings. Also Mr. Somebody, the Dane, sang some beautiful national airs; the English youth wanted to be sentimental, but neither Mrs. Rose nor myself felt any inclination to indulge him in it. I was glad when time and opportunity favoured my retreat, and feeling no inclination to sleep I have spent this half hour in converse with you. Farewell. Good night. I wonder how I shall get over to-morrow.

18th December. *Bishop's College.*—I cannot yet feel at home here, nor think I ever shall. The whole party are so opposite in habits and feeling. Mrs. Rose is the best among them, and I really feel for her and think the sooner she is in a home of her own the better. Still I do not comprehend how she ever could bring herself to marry such a man, though I do think he is very amiable and 'seems beyond measure devoted to her. He was not, I believe, in days of yore what he is now in appearance, having become deaf from fever, and lost his eye by an accident.

'From Indus to the Pole' things move, I believe, on the same principle. Ladies are jealous, sisters-in-law quarrel. As I sat writing the morning after my arrival I heard Mrs. R. and Mrs. M. in conversation in the same room, and as the dialogue was carried on aloud I had no reason to suppose it was not intended for me; though I did not wish to be disturbed at the moment, snatches of the subject would intrude while I was mending my pen or otherwise disengaged. Mrs. R. was detailing her ancient wrongs from Mr. R.'s sisters, all they had *said*, had *done*, had *intended*! And it did seem they had been rather bitter; why, I did not see, for certainly she was superior to anything he had a right to hope for in a wife.

Afterwards she introduced the subject to me, and said nothing could have induced her to come out to him if she had not understood his sister was married, or to be married immediately. I tried to comfort her by telling her that by what I had heard the young lady was not single from choice, and would doubtless soon bless some happy person with her hand and amiable qualifications. I sit with her most of my time, it often leads my mind from my own miseries, besides that she has given me much and painful information relative

to my poor Charlotte's death, although unable to tell what was the immediate cause; she appeared to sink daily without any, and to suffer from the most hopeless depression of spirits; some unseen grief was evidently consuming her. *This* detail did not surprise me. . . . The account she gave of Mr. Gough's whole conduct was shocking; she said openly, Charlotte seemed additionally wretched when he was near her and shunned all society. He seemed careless of everything but his own amusement or personal gratification.

There is a good library here, which is to me an unspeakable relief. . . . Mr. Mill I rarely meet but in the evening, and he is so absent in his manners as to be almost a Dominie Sampson. He is said to possess a highly cultivated mind, and to be an excellent classical scholar; indeed, he could not be in his present situation unless he were such. On the whole I don't think scholars agreeable companions generally, or perhaps I am not suited to them; be that as it may, I observe the happiness of life depends much more on the qualities of the heart than the head; I would never place them in comparison. I like to see the *effect* of learning, but hardly care for the display of the thing itself, and doubt if books can enlarge all minds, or bestow that decision and consistency, that humanising liberality which alone makes one man superior to another. To my taste, learning sits easier on a soldier than any other, the habits and changes of his life leave no time for the rust of pedantry to collect and divest his manners of the polish of good society. He leads a life of action not of speculation. The most accomplished men I have ever met are those whose cultivated minds were directed to render the ordinary tenor of domestic life happy, its relationships blessedness in their exercise and fulfilment.

I have often thought if a person entirely abstracted from the occupations and interests of life, individually, were merely to observe the variety of pursuits, divisions, and projects, which agitate the society such a person moved in, what a curious picture of human life it would afford. Such a case is very nearly *mine*. *My world has passed from me*; I have for myself neither hope nor fear. I cannot be worse, nor greatly better. The sorrow, the suspense, the hope, the happiness of past existence is only to me here as a tale that was told.

Some writer says, 'The sure method to obtain the favour of all persons is by being a patient listener.' I am a listener from necessity, but very far from a *patient* one. I am a *silent* one, because I see the folly of endeavouring to combat prejudice, and indeed with common minds you run the risk of doing more harm than good, by offering advice. Were I capable of assuming the office, the one to whom I should offer counsel would stand high indeed in my opinion. Yet the strong require aid as certainly as the weak, for the firmest mind is subject to occasional lapses, from the influence of the feelings bearing too keenly on particular points. We all know that we distinguish more clearly an object a little removed, than when just before one's eyes. So says Bacon in his little volume of *Essays*, a work equally replete with beauty and truth.

There is at present a most dreadful warfare going on in this quiet-looking habitation, the merits of which I am ignorant of, having only heard one side of the story. The late Bishop Heber, who requires no eulogium I can offer, brought as Chaplain from Bombay a Mr. Robinson, who is, I am told, a most elegant scholar as well as agreeable man, and there were few better judges on these points than the excel-

lent and amiable Bishop. Mr. Robinson was living here for some time I believe, assisting in translating the Bible into some Oriental tongue not generally known; also during the illness of Mr. Mill he performed his duties, and both families, for a time, resided together. But there arose some terrible and unappeasable quarrel between the ladies, some point of precedence,—in fact I know not what, only that Mrs. Robinson was an Englishwoman and not inclined to give the lead to Mrs. Mill, whose birth was a disadvantage her fair antagonist failed not to make the most of. Whatever was the origin of the quarrel between the gentlemen, the enmity of the ladies kept it alive, and the most unchristian and excessive dislike separates them. I don't know how Doctors of Divinity give each other the lie and then meekly go into the pulpit to preach of charity 'suffering long and being kind.' Mr. Mill has no command of temper, and it makes me really nervous to listen to what is here the prevalent topic, at breakfast, at dinner, and the Vesper song.

Well! I am told Mr. Robinson never speaks about the matter, neither justifies himself or accuses his adversary. But I understand the subject is to be referred to Bishop James on his arrival, as it seems impossible to close the breach or reconcile the parties. Sometimes when I feel quite bewildered with listening to this theme, I escape into my room, and by and by Mrs. Rose knocks at the door and she commences the story of *her* wrongs and all her dismal forebodings. But I can *laugh* with her, which with the others is impossible.

The lives of most ladies in India appear to a stranger most unprofitable and frivolous (I say *appear*, for none can tell what a lady's *thoughts* may be, when she is lying on her couch), at least during the day. There are, however, some busy moments;

the arrangement and choice of dress fill up many, and it is canvassed as if life and death were at issue, especially among country-born ladies, whose dirzees have certainly no sinecure. Poor patient things! they sit on their mats, with such a mournful aspect, too often beholding the wreck of their industry. I do assure you I saw a lady whose gown was shorter in the waist than it should have been, tear it off in fragments, throw them at the culprit, and order *him* to provide new muslin for another, otherwise he should be dismissed without his two months arrears being discharged.

It sometimes makes me laugh, what I listen to and what I see. A poor excellent lady, I suppose her to be such, after days of deliberation had fixed on a dress for going to Government House in. I assisted her to the best of my judgment, aided by recollections of Regent Street, to select a trimming which was put in her hands. Unfortunately she went to Calcutta, and learning there of the arrival of a young lady at the house of an acquaintance, she drove six miles in the burning noon, on the chance of finding her at home, and obtaining some more novel pattern. The ladies were not at home, so she wrote at the house a petition expressive of her wants, and returned, agitated by many hopes and fears. Next evening a chupprassy arrived with a volume of the *Ladies' Magazine* containing models of the latest trimmings. You really must have pitied me; every soul in the house was taken into council; she pursued me from room to room. 'My dearest Mrs. Campbell, here is the very thing, what a lovely flounce, what a sweet trimming!' Then the next moment it would be, 'Oh, Mrs. Campbell, here is another more beautiful!'

The result of all this was—none was decided on, and finally, the dirzee forced to complete an inferior one in such haste it had to be half stitched, half pinned on her gown at the last

moment, during which you may fancy the lady's temper. I was lying on my couch in my dressing-gown reading, not being of this or any other party, when the ayah came crying to the door, giving me Mem Sahib's salaam, so I proceeded to her room and such a scene there! All the dirzees of all the ladies at this unhappy gown, and, to make matters worse, the arrangement of her hair was unfortunate. The ayah through fear had failed, and my assistance was the last hope. Poor thing, if she had but believed that no soul would ever think about it, or perhaps look at her, she might have spared a world of woe. We tried flowers, then gauze, curls, everything that might remedy the evil, with little success, for the difficulty lay in the scantiness of the lady's hair, and she wished it to have the same effect of Miss —— just arrived from Ireland in the blossom of youth and beauty, fair seventeen, and with luxuriant hair; and *what* art could effect her wishes? After trying to adjust some refractory tresses she suddenly exclaimed, 'How *you* are to be envied!' I stared at her; she then explained it was my hair she coveted. You may fancy how infinitely I was relieved when the whole party, servants and all, were gone off, and I left to enjoy the perusal of *The Epicurean*, which I had just opened when summoned to this conference. /

The other evening I heard Mrs. Heber's name frequently repeated, and rather with some terms bordering on censure. I was much surprised; from all I had ever learned, I believed her to be a most amiable and talented woman, in short such a wife as we expect to meet with *such* a man. There was something she had done which they were discussing, and pronounced it 'not consistent with strict propriety.' I was considerably relieved to find it was some particular trimming omitted on her bonnet.

20th December.—I was not a little disappointed to-day to have my letter to Captain Reynolds returned from Kedgerree, the *Royal George* having sailed. I could have gone home with him with much comfort, as Mrs. R. was on board, and I might have been sure of more attention in case of illness than I could otherwise expect. But this is past, and no remedy that I can see. I most anxiously expect letters from George or James; if they knew how uncomfortable I feel here, I am sure they could not wish me to remain.

22nd December.—How strange I felt it to be at a wedding and dressed in bridal finery. . . . Mrs. Rose requested I would go with her. The ceremony was to take place in the cathedral at 10 o'clock, and there was quite an undertaking to get across the river and assemble in due time. I really did feel for her, she seemed to feel herself so friendless. I forgot to notice the arrival of Miss Rhind, and how particularly disagreeable, ugly, and audacious she was; nevertheless she and Mrs. Mill appear sworn allies. I could see that everything Mrs. R. did was an opening for censure and comment. What a formidable business it was; a very large party had assembled before us, most of them strangers to Mrs. R. as well as myself, and some did me the honour of supposing *me* to be the bride.

There is something to me very sorrowful in the ceremonial of a wedding; even where the happiest circumstances combine, it affects the feelings. Mrs. R. was past that time of life when youth and inexperience appeals to the heart, but I felt for her, though she must be more comfortable in the freedom of her own house than she has been, beset with the cuckoo song of, 'You must do this and must have that.'

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Some of the wedding party reassembled at the college at a

late tiffin or early dinner. I was wearied to death and hardly heard anything that was passing till Colonel — of the artillery said, 'Is there any one here interested in the arrivals at Madras?' Several voices said 'No!' I waited to know the worst, recollecting that no account of George had yet reached me. He went on: 'There has been a dreadful gale or hurricane, vast loss among the shipping, and many vessels driven out to sea not yet heard of.' I then, as calmly as I could, inquired if he knew the names of any which had been lost, and, my face betraying my alarm, he seemed much concerned at having mentioned it, offering to send me from Calcutta the paper containing the detail. But I was too anxious to wait, and sent off my bearer to Mr. Allan, begging he would let me know what had happened. He sent me the papers, accompanied by an assurance that the ship George sailed in must have arrived long before the gale, and certainly was not among those that had suffered either wreck or injury. He also mentioned Jane's earnest wish to see me, which her approaching confinement prevented her attempting, and renewed their request that whenever their guest Mrs. Paxton sailed for Penang I would visit and remain with them while in Calcutta. This was very kindly meant, and I felt I must exert myself and call on her. I was thankful they had changed their residence, for I could hardly have borne to return to Ballygunge.

Before I received this letter I had mentioned to Mrs. M. that I felt anxious, and that, if she would excuse my leaving her drawing-room, being unfitted for society, I would walk along the bank of the river until my bearer returned, and departed. Feeling increased reluctance to return, I took the path to the Botanic Garden, which is so close as to almost be a part of the compound. . . . It was comparative felicity to

be there alone, to escape from a crowd of strangers. . . . The shaded walk resembled a row of English elms; I hardly recollected where I was till the slender palmira and coca trees proclaimed another region of earth, and one at this moment beautiful indeed to both eye and imagination. The broad river was a perfect mirror, the boats on its surface, the elegant houses on the opposite bank, the palm trees and huts were all reflected with unerring fidelity. I stood for many minutes, fixed in attention, before I could turn from so sweet a scene even to enter the garden, in itself so attractive.

The last botanic garden I had seen was that of Glasgow, where I went with Niel and Mrs. Lang and her daughter; the tropical plants, the pomegranate, the plaintain and datura, were carefully secured by glass. Here they grew in native luxuriance on a spot which seemed borrowed from the jungle, the background being composed of ancient trees. It is most advantageously laid out with a happy adherence to nature, some parts allotted to shrubs, others to spice trees, again to flowers of which the scent was exquisite although the names unknown. But one year since how delighted I should have been here, even now the sadness it inspired was not pain but melancholy. The evening began to close and the waters took a deeper shade. When I say waters I mean the tanks, bordered with tall and drooping palm and date trees, the grass smooth as velvet sloping down to the water, which at intervals showed the long, pendulous leaves stirring, as a sigh of the evening breeze stole among them and wafted the delicious odour of the chumpa or white-blossomed magnolia. . . . I sat until I recollected the necessity of returning, to prevent any observations on my absence.

I mentioned to Mrs. Mill that night that I was very anxious to visit a friend who could not call on me, if she would let me

have her boat the first day it was disengaged. . . . On arriving in Fairley Place I sent for Mr. A., not wishing to make my appearance to her unannounced. Putting any sympathy with me out of the question, it was natural she should feel the loss of her cousin. Mr. Allan accordingly went to her dressing-room where I shortly followed him. She seemed very affectionate and much affected, and I did strive all in my power to recover myself. After sitting some hours, during which she again made me promise to come to her, she spoke with much feeling of the pitiable situation of Mrs. Paxton, then daily expecting to quit them. Her husband was an assistant-surgeon, stationed at Benares, I believe, and being rather delicate was recommended change of air, to get to the coast if possible. They came down the Ganges without any apprehension, nor did he consider himself worse, until they reached Chinsurah, when his malady underwent a sudden and alarming change. He felt himself dying, and, I believe, was unable to do more than express a wish to see Allan, whom she sent for half distracted; he had hardly reached the budgerow when the scene closed, and the poor young woman was left there a widow, without relative or even acquaintance save Allan, who removed her with her delicate infant to his house. Jane expressed the shock she received to have been terrible, having no suspicion of the case. The first thing she saw was her husband bringing in this poor young creature.

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25th December.—Christmas day, the second I have seen in India. . . . With what a heart-sinking feel I came to breakfast. . . . At that moment one word of kindness would have made the tears gush, but the apathy of all there made me struggle to repress them. I joined the party going to the college chapel; I recollected for what purpose the observance

of that day was enjoined, and felt it indeed a privilege to call God my Father, and implore His direction and aid under whatever lot He was pleased to assign me.

Yet my heart bled at the remembrance of home, I could not restrain my tears all the time I knelt. I believe the traces were very visible during the conclusion of the service, when the heat obliged me to throw up the only covering on my head, a white veil. I frequently met Lady Ryan's eyes fixed on me, not with an intrusive scrutiny, but an expression of sensibility very intelligible to me; she is, I believe, a most amiable, domestic woman; her sister Miss Whitmore is, too, a very fine young woman, with a countenance like Hebe. They came to pay a visit after service, but I did not go into the room, my heart felt too much oppressed. I sat at my window trying to compose myself; the more I strove my tears came faster. I sat with the Bible on my knee, but could not distinguish a line. At dinner there were several persons in addition to the party, and all seemed very merry, and some I thought very cruel. It was evident, from various indications, they had been talking of *me*, and some observations were made for *me to hear*, of ladies making a display of their feelings to attract *admiration*. As soon as dinner was over, I felt I could not conceal my disgust and went to my room, intending to go to the garden when the air was cool. My bearer came to my door with a number of up-country letters: one from my dear Lady D'Oyly, which at that moment was a salutary communication and nerved me against the want of courtesy, not to speak of unkindness, of those about me. A very kind letter from Dr. Patterson, full of kind inquiries, and one from Fenton, who is determined never to cease from writing, though it be to little purpose.

These letters engaged me until the air was cool, and then

I took my favourite path to the gardens, through that long shaded walk. It was then, what rarely occurs, a calm and clouded evening, something peculiarly European. The river reflected a darkened sky, not the glare of blue generally visible. There was not a leaf stirring, and the boats glided on with the mere impulse of the stream, like Time, bearing on our frail bark to the gulf of Eternity. I could not then help tracing the changes brought by each anniversary of that day.

On Christmas 1826 I was at Calcutta, gay, happy, and unthinking of change or sorrow. We dined on that day with Mrs. Bruce, an Armenian lady; well I recollected my spirits in dressing and Niel watching and approving,—our walk home at night and conversation on all that had passed. In 1825 I spent Christmas day at Kilderry, and it was a sad one. Charlotte was in Bath, John in London, Henry at Bombay, George at sea, and dear Mrs. Hart was so wretched about him, she was unable to leave her bed, I spent many hours at her bedside trying to support her spirits. How well I remember going to dinner alone with the General, the wind howling so mournfully through the old trees by the window; I vainly attempted to converse with him. . . . But who would have prophesied *then* that the same vacancy caused by absence should soon be rendered permanent by death? That he who then sat in melancholy abstraction before me was destined to be the desolate survivor of wife and children, that we were both destined to lament for all that made life desirable? . . . Still further back I might have traced each annual change, but twilight rapidly obscured the way and I returned towards the house. I tried to say and *feel* 'Thy will be done,' and to convince myself that the inscrutable ways of God were *one day* to be cleared of doubt and mystery. Yet with this feeling

returned a sad conviction that, however I may have suffered and been chastened, still the blessed fruits of repentance, faith, and hope in God were far from my heart; I have not yet been brought to see God in the storm, though well knowing that before the breath of His displeasure my whole fabric of earthly happiness has been scattered like dust in the whirlwind. I *see* the wreck of my 'House built upon the sand,' but alas! am yet far from the Rock of Ages, which alone can shelter and defend.

30th December, Sunday.—I woke this morning feeling very sad and ill too, commencing it as I had ended yesterday by shedding bitter tears, knowing that there was another struggle of twelve hours to commence. I was too unwell to go to church, but hastened to dress and join the breakfast-party, making it a point to give as little trouble as I can and not to absent myself without cause. I often sit for hours endeavouring to catch some conversation in which I may take a part, lest silence should be misconstrued into ill-humour.

My whole mind is filled with astonishment and disgust on listening to the terrible acrimony towards many whom I know not only to be blameless but exemplary. I absolutely could not have believed that a circle of persons existed so wholly devoid of liberality and feeling as these with whom the dark thread of my destiny has entwined me. I had often been told that half-castes had no sympathy with Europeans, but I rejected it as an illiberal sentence on a whole race. Now I do believe, for I *see* and *hear* it.

I sometimes ask myself if this misery can ever pass away, if I am indeed indissolubly united to grief and disappointment. My residence with Eliza D'Oyly in one respect has been a disadvantage; accustomed to her large and elegant mind, her taste, her sensibility, all others seem as beings of an inferior

order. How sad to remember her smile, her voice, the touch of her dear hand. If I were less miserable I could smile at the importance attached to dress and etiquette. . . . Perhaps it is that those whose pretensions and place in society are not fully established attach that import to observances and omissions which persons who *feel* themselves in their proper sphere never question or remember, and either adopt or reject at pleasure.

I have been revolving again the impossibility of continuing here and almost determine I will go to Agra. I cannot wait any longer for George's either approval or dissent, for my position here is intolerable, and I am compelled to meet rudeness which I ought not to submit to. I must go, but the length of the journey and my delicate health makes it an undertaking of much difficulty. To go alone is nearly impossible. I will write to Eliza D'Oyly about it, and as Mrs. Grant has so many acquaintances perhaps she may find some one going up the country with whom I could travel. Having made this resolve I joined the company at dinner and passed the evening (for I was too ill to go out) listening to abuse of Mr. Robinson and the Archdeacon Corrie, relieved with occasional wrangling about schools and religious dogmas.

If *these* are the effects of learning and reform I think the Hindoos are better off in their present unenlightened state. *These* preceptors should commence with the reformation of their own tempers and hearts. But *this* change can only be effected by the grace of God; there is no effort of natural reason can do it.

After going into my room, my bearer, whom I had sent to the post-office, returned and presented at my door a large packet of letters from England. Oh! if I could but express to you the joy I felt at the sight, just when I pronounced

my heart so desolate. Among others one from dear Catherine contained some beautiful pencilled sketches of the scenes around Dungiven, those dear and favourite spots she knew I could not forget, and this little act of remembrance 'fell on my heart like dew on withered flowers.' I had never before felt what it was to be treated with open incivility, and the pledge which this offered that there were still left those who loved and whose love could not fail, was indeed a consolation.

I found an addition to the party this morning in Mr. Elphinston. He is a gentlemanlike man and seems fond of Mrs. Mill, more so than Mrs. Gouldsbury. Indeed, though not partial to either, I think she is the best of the two, and if she had been born and educated in England, might have been very different. There is one point I think decidedly *amiable* in her: she speaks of Mrs. Elphinston with so much more kindness than her sister did, and she had more cause to feel the father's marriage, having been so many years mistress of his family.

I had a visit from the surgeon of the *Warren Hastings*, who seems a very pleasing young man, though much encumbered with *mauvaise honte*. He gave me the most melancholy detail of poor Charlotte's death, which made my heart bleed. Poor girl! he said it was almost impossible to say what was the original cause of her death, he was not called in till her case was beyond remedy; . . . she seemed a prey to grief, never slept, and scarcely ceased to weep; was evidently unhappy with her husband, and seemed averse to his being in her sight. She lamented after her mother incessantly. Dr. Graham said he sincerely believed that if

they had met a homeward-bound ship in which she might have returned, she would have lived; that if any one ever died of distress of mind she was the one; and joined with me in lamenting that one so beautiful and talented should have been thus cut off, almost without cause. . . . I could not but coincide with his opinion—indeed, I had reasons for believing it too well founded, that he was ignorant of. He offered to convey to Ireland anything I might wish to send, and expressed a wish to obtain an introduction to some of her family, thinking it very probable misrepresentations would be given. Indeed I believe she had requested him to do this. Poor thing! she little thought the fond mother she lamented for was already beyond the reach of sorrow.

.
2nd January 1828.—

‘Another year, it cannot be
Such as the last has been to me.’

The waters cannot flow *back* to the fountain, nor can my happiness be renewed, but I may be restored to the consolations of friendship and humanity. Oh! may it please the Almighty to mitigate the real evils I do now suffer, to lead me into a less thorny path.

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A large party assembled here this morning for the avowed purpose of visiting the Botanic Garden. There were a number of girls just arrived from England, and this party was made partly for them. There were four of one family, who even in England would have been considered very handsome; the eldest was quite beautiful, and consequently there attended a train of gentlemen and admirers. The mamma herself was a very fine woman, not past the meridian of life, and evidently

felt all a mother's delight at the acknowledged loveliness of her daughters. As the visit to the gardens was of necessity deferred till sunset, there was to be a three o'clock dinner and music to pass the morning. I admired this elegant girl even more from her evident unwillingness to be shown off; in fact at all these parties there is such a glaring want of the refinement of English habits, a girl must in self-defence surmount her feelings and perform the part assigned in the pageant. *She*, however, was too recently arrived to be perfect in this part, and her visible wish to retreat from the admiration her voice and beauty excited rendered her doubly attractive.

I saw none else who interested me; . . . my mind was out of tune, and I gradually retreated into a little apartment, a kind of library, at one end of the building. . . . I generally write there, and, from the manner in which doors lie open, sometimes listen to curious dialogues in the general reception-room next to it; I don't mean private conversation, as such must compel me to announce my vicinity. To listen in this way without seeing the speaker, has the same effect with closing your ears and seeing people dance.

There was a beautiful Indiaman, I believe the *Ganges*, lying with all sail spread, preparing to depart for England, and I took possession of a couch where this fine and interesting object occupied all my attention,—a little world on the waters,—and what variety of human hope and fear, anticipation and regret, might it contain! I could not look without a sigh on what might so soon restore me to home and kindred. I hardly observed that a gentleman had taken his position at the other window, till he spoke, being enough acquainted for that intercourse, and I perceived him also led there by the same desire of being alone, though we frustrated each other's purpose. I found his conversation very agreeable, and very unlike the

rest of the party. He spoke as if he *thought*. We compared our ideas of India; his formed after twenty-four years' residence, mine after one, and it was curious to observe on some points the coincidence. He was then just preparing to revisit England, and the workings of a sensitive mind were visible in the foreboding he seemed to have, more of what he should *miss* than what he should meet. He had lately left Agra, and knew my cousins the Campbells there. It seemed too as if my name was not unknown to him. We conversed much on the vicissitudes of life there, and the probable revolutions even one year might produce, among the youthful and happy faces round us. I told him I suspected him to be the 'Old Bengalee,' whose writings, in one of the Calcutta papers, almost equal the 'Subaltern.'

After a few languid hours, the business of eating superseded the charms of music, however wisely the siren might have charmed, and I was well pleased that my afore-mentioned acquaintance maintained his position by my side, as he was the only conversable person I had met for a long time. I have often told you what especial pleasure I take in the society of an old soldier. . . . Though I ought not to fix on Major — the appellation of 'old soldier,' for he is not in reality such, but twenty-four years in India anticipates time. He looks, I dare say, that number of years older than what he really is, and I should hope that he may yet have many years of enjoyment to come, although I have been so sadly instructed of the teaching of hope, whose vanishing illusions the heart blindly clings to. I feel sadly convinced of the disappointment that must await *him*, and all returning with the vain hope of finding home as it was, when they left it.

Alas! How can we dream that the spring of life may be renewed, when we carry in our own hearts the germ of pain?

There are the graves of lost happiness and hope. What fellow mortal, be his lot ever so fair,

‘After long years spent in the stormy world,’

can look back without emotion to the vivid feelings with which he set out on the journey? Suppose that worldly advancement was his object, and that he *has* attained it, *where* are those for whom perhaps he toiled, watched, and endured long years of exile from his native land, from all the ties of youth and affection? How few of those he left may now remain to meet him, and fewer still unchanged by time. . . . It is not *here* that he can find what he seeks, some being to feel *with* and *for* him. He cannot form friendships with the young, and advanced life has but small share of enthusiasm. *How could it?* when our daily progress and practice all tend to dispel this, and every delusion of which our dream of happiness is composed, and thus the poor Bengalee is left to feel

‘That life’s enchanted cup but sparkles at the brim,’

when the trials arising from overwrought feeling and exhausted health do more demand the solace of domestic affection. . . .

How many feelings of this nature were filling my heart at the moment I was trying to converse, where all around me were gay, gay and youthful faces, gay dresses, among which mine was the only one of mourning. Husbandless, fatherless, friendless I sat there, as isolated as if I had belonged to another race of beings; the only creature who seemed to have a heart was the stranger who sat at my side.

About four o’clock we went off to the gardens, with which the girls just arrived were delighted. . . . I believe the greatest wonder to all present, as it had been long before to myself, was a magnificent-banyan tree. How little had any written description ever conveyed to me a just idea of its extent, nor do

I know how to find any that might express it to you, however desirous you should have some conception of such a sublime object. Imagine one mighty trunk, or rather an assemblage of stems grown together; from the wide extended lateral branches, roots descend and take root, increasing in thickness till they too assume the appearance of pillars, perfectly straight, smooth and polished. When this form is perfect, from the spot where the root first descended, other branches shoot out, extending in regular distances and forming another and a wider circle; they throw down roots which form another family of pillars outside the first; if there was space, how far this extension might progress is beyond calculation. Already the tree seems to have stood for centuries, strengthened by its own reproduction. The eye is relieved and delighted by the variety of luxuriant creepers, twining round these pillars, clothing them in wreaths of the most glowing hues and glossy foliage; the roots of these seeming like monstrous cables on the ground, where they had precisely the same twisted, rope-like appearance. I had never heard of this tree, and came on it accidentally one evening; I stood and gazed for minutes without moving, almost without breathing. . . . The only object to which it afforded any degree of comparison was a mighty cathedral, as I stood by the trunk and saw each circle of pillars and arches extend and diminish in beautiful perspective. On one side the last branches drooped into the river, and a faint breeze from the water at intervals put the leaves and flowers of the light creepers into quivering motion, and a stream of moonlight, clear as day, in many places falling on them, produced an effect I never can forget. There was but one poet who could have described it justly, he

‘Who stood within the Coliseum’s walls
Mid the chief relics of almighty Rome.’

For me, I could only gaze, and again adore the wonder-working hand, which had permitted such an object to arise in the trackless desert.

Twilight now reminded the young and old alike to separate, as they had to cross the river and return to their homes to dress for dinner, and recommence their search after happiness. For some of the party this was all fair and natural; while the youthful and buoyant spirit animates them in its pursuit, wherefore should they not seek for that which *few* can find, but *none retain*? I saw one by one descend to the ghaut, and as they glided off strange thoughts passed over my mind, as if *they* were but visionary forms, and the whole pageant a dream. . . . All were gone! those gay and beautiful girls just launched into a new era of existence. Before another year what changes will have taken place; they will all have married, few fine-looking girls remain single longer; and *then* who will predict their future destiny?

I felt rejoiced that accident separated me from the rest who were returning to the college, some were much in advance, others as much in the rear. Every day increases my dislike and discomfort, to be among these amiable reformers of the faults and follies of mankind. All the wisdom of the Egyptians cannot counterbalance a bad temper and weak mind. Then vanity walking abroad in the cloak of religion is worse than in any other guise. I forbear to ask the most trifling question about the establishment, lest I should get into some scrape with these merciless people, but it evidently is going on very badly. It wants respectability, which it never will acquire while a half-caste is mistress, for no ladies of influence will take an active interest in its support. His irritability keeps the better part of the clergy aloof altogether. If people in England could just see what I see, and hear

what I hear, they would apply their money and time to better purpose.

4th January.—I have been so ill these two days I really am wretched beyond expression. . . . I had asked Mrs. Mill to let her woman bring me a bottle of hot water, which she did bring, and *left on the floor without a cork*; consequently I could make no use of it. Oh! how bitterly I cried over the idea of all the love and tenderness so lately lavished on me. I have lain on my couch the most of the day shivering with cold, though wrapped in two Indian shawls.

Mrs. Mill has had a busy evening preparing for a ball at Government House. She asked me to assist her with some part of her hairdressing, in short, to arrange it like my own. This was quite impossible, for it is the quantity of mine which produces the effect I cannot make in hers, but I did my very best on the occasion, and oh, what a business dressing without youth, grace, or beauty is! Miss Rhind spent the day with her, and I had the pleasure of being left *tête-à-tête* with this lady, towards whom I have a perfect aversion. After tea she began to speak of Mrs. M. and Mrs. Gouldsbury, evidently to induce me to communicate my opinions, which design I saw and resolved to frustrate. I therefore changed the conversation, but again and again she renewed it, with observations on half-castes and European ladies, and very much of the same style. I lost all patience, and called my bearer for my writing-box, saying I had some letters to send by the *Warren Hastings*, and I could perceive that the lady was much disappointed that I would not commit myself.

7th January.—We went yesterday to visit Mrs. Rhind, who begged, beseeched me to come and stay with her for a little, which I would readily do, were it not for my horror of being in the house with her sister-in-law. She has got a superb

house indeed, and the little doctor seems so enraptured with her, it is quite amusing; poor soul! she requires it all.

10th January.—While walking by the river, almost dark, a messenger arrived with the intelligence of Bishop James being at Kedgerree; you cannot fancy anything like the commotion here; the preparation made by Mill to go off and meet him with packets of charges and complaints against Mr. Robinson, to lose no time in fixing on the Bishop's mind an unfavourable impression. Often did I sigh over poor human nature as I looked and listened. A few days will determine the effect of this measure; I should think it would impress the Bishop with a feeling very contrary to what they intend. I quietly went on my way rejoicing that they were too much engaged to miss me, and presently found myself in my usual seat in the Botanic Garden.

That garden, I never, never shall forget it; how have I watched for the hour I might hide in it, though in my soreness of heart I believe I have fancied the innocent trees half-castes or Cambridge divines, decorated with fiery tongues, instead of glowing blossoms; I feared they would stride out of the ground and pursue me. . . . A little plantation of coffee skirted by mahogany trees is one of my favourite resorts; nor can I walk through it without remembering the eager curiosity with which in childhood I turned the pages of my botanical history to copy its leaves and berries, or recalling the vision of a winter night at home—my father reading, my sweet mother and Catherine working, George and James drawing—James, his blue eyes and shining fair hair, the open forehead tinged by the transparent veins, the quick and intelligent glance, my dear brother! . . . What was it to me to see the clustering blossoms of the chumpā, or the snowy flowers of the magnolia, when I thought of the spreading branches of

the sycamore under which we used to spread our tiny hay-cocks, and remember that *he*, like myself, was wasting in mind and health in this pernicious climate. . . . If tears did wither flowers these could not last long, for many a tear *I shed over them.*

When too late longer to ruminate among the flowers, I must turn my steps towards 'that gloomy pile where sadness never dies,' said poor Mary, and though I am not a queen, as a woman and an unhappy one, the case admits of a parallel. My shortened path is through that line of teak-trees, whose roots, strewn with withered leaves, rustle and display beneath the revolting object of skulls without number dragged by the voracious jackals from the river. These cross my path so fearlessly, it makes me often shudder, combined with the effect of their wild, dire cry.

When I returned with these excited feelings I found the whole party in solemn Divan, and perceived that something terrible had taken place. I assumed my wonted seat, and would not even read, lest it might be supposed a failure in politeness, so waited with resignation till the tale did itself unfold. It was even this,—a select party at Government House, to which they were not invited, though Mr. and Mrs. Robinson were, who had also been at the last. I could hardly have credited the importance attached to this circumstance, and can only account for it by the precarious position half-castes hold in society.

I have never before been so long without letters from James. He is, I believe, on his return to Jaulnah, and supposes I am with George. This is miserable, indeed, and

makes me still more anxious to go to Agra, where I am sure of finding in George Lawrence an affectionate friend. He seems quite delighted at the idea of my being near him there.

Next day there was such a bustle; the bishop wished to see the college and chapel, and a large party, in addition to his own family, were to come to breakfast. They did come, and the appearance of the bishop was very prepossessing. He was not young, but there was something very interesting in his mild and dignified aspect. His wife was a very fine-looking young woman about twenty-four. . . . They were a very gay, happy party, and seemed to be pleased with themselves and the whole world.

Next morning I received from Mr. Allan a note mentioning the birth of his son, also that Mrs. Paxton had left them, and Jane was most anxious to see me, and much more to this effect. I have accordingly decided on going from hence in a day or two, for let my further motions be what they may, there is no necessity for my remaining here to be miserable.

Fairley Place, 24th January.—Another long interval, though I can hardly tell the cause, unless a continual occupation of my time in little matters. . . . Thank heaven, I am much more comfortable than when I last laid down my pen, though my health is far from good,—indeed I suffer very much, but this is easily borne in comparison. I find Jane extremely kind and affectionate, and pass much of every day with Mrs. Grant, and she is such a light-hearted, happy being, there is no such thing as being dull near her. It is remarkable how essentially a woman's character is operated on by the motives and excitements she may have. Nothing could once have made me believe that Jane could ever be what she now is; from a

thoughtless, extravagant girl she is changed into an affectionate, prudent mother, devoted to her child, regardless of every personal exertion or inconvenience. There is one part of her change which grieves me to observe, that of her health. She at times has that beautiful hectic glow which too surely indicates lurking disease. It is a great pity she could not nurse her boy, who is a fine strong creature, and she is obliged to resign to another, and a native woman, the pleasure of nursing him. I never saw a mother who did not nurse so fond of the child. . . . These nurses are actual pests; they know they cannot be dispensed with. She very wisely trusts nothing to them, and has all the toil of a nurse herself. To relieve her a little I insist on her going to bed at nine, and I sit in the room and watch the child till about one o'clock. She has perfect confidence in me, knowing I love children, and have been much with them, and this is one reason why I have not written since my arrival, the hour I used to appropriate to that purpose being no more my own.

The heat is much greater here than at Garden Reach, and I feel this month much hotter than last year; perhaps it is my strength is reduced. My appetite is quite gone; every exertion is a labour to me; I feel a listlessness I cannot conquer. Added to these uncomfortable sensations I really am very unhappy at never having received a line from James or George, and I see no prospect of being able to go to Agra. If I cannot get there before the hot winds commence, I need not attempt it after.

✍ I never saw anything like Mrs. Grant's activity, I do think she is over the most of Calcutta every day. She calls on me after breakfast, and as fast as horses can drive we go from bazaar to bazaar. . . . After all this bustle during the morning

she generally drives out, having so many friends in town, and Miss Dickson at home to take care of the children. I frequently return to Fairley Place so tired that I go to my bed without dining. But generally Jane insists on my going to the Course, as, whether you are ill or well, to drive in the evening is considered a thing of necessity. They have a nice carriage which duly attends me. Yet no part of the day is so melancholy to me as this drive, the solitude of being alone in a crowd is here manifested. There are a few I know, but the bow of a passing acquaintance is such a cold and heartless thing. I drive almost unconsciously to and fro, and see very many seeming as comfortless as myself, while a few of the young and gay render the contrast more striking. Almost all whom I had known as new arrivals have gone up the country. ✓

This evening while I was writing a letter, Jane and Mrs. Bruce (an Armenian lady) came into my dressing-room and asked me to look at some silks and ribbands they were choosing from a box-wallah outside. As it was too hot for writing, I laid my pen aside and went with them into the lobby. I believe my indifference provoked the ladies who were consulting me, and a display of dress always makes me melancholy from its contrast with my own. In fact I had no opinion, or was too languid to give one; pink satin was just pink satin, no more to me than sackcloth. Mrs. Bruce was determined I should speak and think, for she came up with a beautiful white scarf in her hand, and, drawing her chair close, addressed me thus, 'Mrs. Campbell, you not be angry what I say?' I assured her of my indulgence of everything she thought proper to mention. She resumed, 'You going to marry one doctor?' The abruptness of the question, notwithstanding its melancholy associations, made me smile, and

she proceeded. 'Pon my honour you need not laugh, for I know it all truth.' I then begged to know the particulars, and after some time, finding she became no wiser, her discourse assumed the form of advice. 'I am very sorry you say you no marry the doctor; you know I have many daughter myself, and my heart feel sore when I see you pretty young woman go about alone. No friend, no one to care or comfort you and you very delicate. Every one turn and look when young woman sit here alone. If you no marry, then you must go home.'

Strangely as the discourse was worded it made my heart full. I really could not speak in reply, which she observed, and affectionately taking my hand, said, 'My dear Mrs. Campbell, I am in much sorrow that you have not happy heart.' In the course of the evening's drive how often did her expression, 'A happy heart,' echo in my fancy and recall the time I did indeed experience all its blessedness.

26th January.—My bearer came to my room this morning to say a gentleman waited to see me in the drawing-room. Not expecting any visitor who would interest me I did not attend very quickly. When I entered, what a start of pain was awakened by the appearance of Campbell of the 47th. I knew not he was even in India: we parted on board the *Cornwall*, where he had remained with us till the last moment. I stood and looked at him without the power of speech. But he well understood my silence; it was some time before we could converse, except in that forced way where each party in the effort to control their feelings relapse into involuntary abstraction. At length the entrance of Jane produced something like general conversation, and he gave me many interesting particulars of my home and family.

However trite may be the observation of the pleasure of meeting even acquaintances in a foreign country, to me it was a new and unexpected feeling. The present was barren and hopeless, the past was my only source of enjoyment. Campbell became our daily visitor, the very sound, of his name was a pleasure, though a mournful one, and I felt really sorry when his departure for Berhampore restored the monotony of my existence.

Mrs. Grant has now settled the time of her return to Maldah; as the river will soon be impassable, she wishes me to accompany her and to make that my way to Patna, but having said in my last letters to James I would remain at Calcutta until I received his answer, I do not like to change my arrangement; in fact, I really know not what to do. The heat becomes intolerable, and every day my strength seems ebbing away. Sometimes when I drive home from the Course by the English burying-ground my heart swells with thoughts and wishes to join those who *were weary and are at rest*.

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VIII

APRIL 3RD—MAY 10TH, 1828

20th May, 1828.—I hope by this time some of the many letters sent you during the last four months will have reached you, and from them you will have learned all the circumstances connected with my marriage, or rather the events which led to it. It is useless to dwell here on them, and some are too painful to recur to willingly. I must try to forget *some part* of my existence, its *separate* portions and situations can hardly be reconciled. I think I wrote to you by the *Herald* and told you I was shortly to marry Fenton, but was too weak then to enter more fully on the subject. It were wise to touch as lightly on the past as possible, yet to be intelligible to you I must retrace something of it.

When Fenton arrived in Calcutta in April, I was sufficiently recovered to walk from my bedroom to the couch in my dressing-room and very imperfectly recollected the occurrences of my long illness. I hardly remember its commencement, I believe from the period I discontinued writing as usual; I can recall to mind, the day after, sitting down and attempting to write, and the paper seeming to me covered with spots of blood; that I went out in the carriage in the evening, and could not distinguish one face from another; the next day sent for Dr. Martin, and after some days his visits were dis-

continued; he was himself attacked with the same fever. Almost every practitioner in Calcutta of eminence was in attendance on Lady Sarah Amherst, whose life was then despaired of. I remember an accidental visit from a Dr. Lovell, who was going to join a corps in one of the higher Provinces. I had offered him letters to some friends there some time before, and, calling to receive them, my bearer on hearing the appellation of doctor, wisely concluded his visit was professional, and ushered him into my bedroom, to our mutual astonishment. When I had explained enough of my illness to enable him to advise, he immediately set off to have some prescriptions made up, referring their propriety to Dr. Martin's decision, which reference I could not agree to, knowing from experience that calomel and quinine must be safe and beneficial. After a little time Dr. Martin came out to see me, and as the attacks of ague and fever returned at regular intervals, and the heat was daily increasing, he said I must be sent to sea. I might go to China or the Isle of France, only that the hurricane months were at hand.

I remember my own thoughts then: my life is at stake; a few more returns of this fever possibly will end it, and they must come unless I seize the first interval to get off; but how am I to leave this couch and go to sea alone, in such a state of weakness, putting all feelings of solitude and helplessness out of the question? Dr. Martin recommended, until I could decide, that I should go on the river, any place out of Calcutta, and while a budgerow was preparing and a European attendant seeking for, my motions were suspended by the movements proposed and, commenced by Fenton and Lady D'Oyly. I was too worn in strength and spirit to care what became of me, or object to any arrangement they made. Fenton came off as quickly as his leave could be obtained,

and as I before told you I was able to walk about the room when he arrived.

I am sure, my dearest friend, I need not to your feeling heart enlarge on the state of my mind, the effort necessary to support myself under such trying circumstances, without one living soul to whom I could or ought to turn for confidence and assurance. Then Fenton could do nothing to compose or support me. The bitterness of my heart was all my own, the more I thought of marrying in such a state of health and in such indecorous haste, the more I revolted from the idea; but the time for hesitating was past, and all I had then to do was to get through my part as firmly as I might; thought and memory would claim their own hour hereafter.

Being among strangers I was, of course, thrown entirely on the kindness and consideration of Fenton, who did all that was within his power. . . . If I had a thousand years to exist I cannot forget the anguish of my feelings, all I felt for myself and also for Fenton; his hopes were not blighted, his feelings unscathed by the experience of mine, and yet he was willing to place his happiness on such an unstable foundation, and I pitied him.

The season was then unfavourable for travelling in almost any direction. Dr. Martin's advice was to go to the sand-heads and try the effect of that change before we made any other arrangement. To further this I must make the attempt to go out, and indeed there was one place where, as a matter of necessity, I must go—with Fenton to the Supreme Court, to make oath I was of age and at liberty from all other engagements, which is an exceedingly unpleasant part of the ceremonial of marriage here, as it is a very public place and there seems all over the world a spirit of curiosity about any one going to marry. It seldom excites any interest to be told

of a burial, but call it a marriage and some comment is sure to be made. So we proceeded there, and for the first time I changed my dress to white and surveyed myself with a feeling of discomfort, like that expressed by the prisoner of Chillon on regaining liberty:—

‘The Prison walls to me had grown
A Hermitage—and all my own !
My very chains appeared my friends
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are : and I
Regain’d my freedom with a sigh.’

I did particularly request Mrs. Allan and Fenton to invite as few persons as possible, *but even those who seemed indispensable to include*, formed a large party. Mrs. Cleland was of the number, and whatever she might have thought she was very kind and affectionate at the time, and seemed much pleased with Fenton. She cordially invited us to her house at any time we liked to change water for shore.

The hour of eight was appointed, but even then the oppression of the air was insupportable, notwithstanding a lofty cathedral and punkahs in motion. There is in this country, from the climate and habits imposed thereby, a want of all the little elegancies of life which on these occasions divide the attention, though in my case I doubt if such would have made any difference.

After the conclusion of the ceremony we were obliged to wait at least an hour for the clerk in whose possession the books were left where we must register our names. At last we regained the house, and had to undergo the misery of a burra hazree (or great breakfast) with the thermometer

above 90°. But as all evils must end, the dispersion of the company afforded me the luxury of rest and relief from my fine lace gown and the couch of my dressing-room. Fenton went off to have all requisite preparations complete in our pinnacle, in which we were to proceed down the river after sunset. . . . It seemed so unlike preparation for a bridal party, bottles of medicine and other accompaniments of an invalid, but I almost required quinine to support my life; sometimes the taper light of my existence seemed trembling and faint. But when once afloat and proceeding softly down with the tide, having got below the noisy and heated bazaars skirting the town, I experienced sensible relief, and when we reached Diamond Harbour the sea breeze brought me comparative strength. I am sure no one of any mind ever forgot Diamond Harbour and the feeling of looking for the first time on the new and beautiful world around them. How fresh were all my first sensations after the lapse of two years and a half as I gazed on it again. The same yet not the same! How had all external objects changed their aspects and meaning since that time, even as much as had my own views and prospects in life—life, that mutable dream, which I then dreamt was to be enjoyed, but *now* feel must be endured, and requiring all our sense of the duty of resignation and our hopes of a future and a better, to enable us to perform our part.

At this season the Nor'west gales are usually felt, and they had set in with such violence we found it impossible to venture down lower; indeed I felt so much better I began to hope no other change might be necessary. Every evening we went on shore for a little variety, but in truth there is not much to vary an Indian landscape and it loses much of its interest because it is impossible to identify yourself in any

✓ way with the inhabitants; you must not even pollute their threshold by passing over it, and if they give you a drink of water they must break the dish or cup which held it.

I cannot say if it is the weariness of my own heart pursuing me, but when I am out, the burning sand or parched earth beneath my feet dispels every illusion of fancy or imagination. The palm trees no longer offer an inviting shade; I am weary of the self-created forest of the banyan; we sit for hours on the banks of the river because I hope the cool air may be beneficial, but it is all in vain; I cannot restore the healthy spring of my soul. Oh! what can freshen the wasted fountain of the heart's hope and pleasures?

One evening the Nor'west gale blew so heavily, I felt sick with the motion, and we left the pinnace and took refuge for the night at the little inn of Fulta, where boats going to Calcutta frequently stop. What a wretched place it was; there was scarcely anything to eat, and with respect to accommodation I could not get a basin of water to wash my hands at night; a wretched night we spent, almost devoured by insects and stung with mosquitoes; so in the morning, in defiance of the storm, we resolved to return to the water, and met my bearer coming on shore to detail the disasters of the night. We found almost everything upset, glasses, basins, bottles broken, all the pretty little appendages of a lady's dressing-table destroyed. After all it was better than Fulta, so we reconciled ourselves to our diminished conveniences and proceeded higher up the river, where the effect of the sea breeze did not extend with the same violence. But what we gained in one respect we lost in another; with the distance from the sea, so did the heat increase. Still I think a person in England would fancy a life of so much uniformity and restraint more wearying than it actually is, and I have often

been at a loss to understand why time seems to move so rapidly in this country.

Having got our pinnacle into safe mooring at Budge Budge (a pretty name enough if I could tell the meaning) we went, after my early dinner, on shore, and for the first time saw an European habitation, after wandering for some time seated ourselves on the bank to rest and watch the gathering shades of night, when rather suddenly a tonjin approached containing a lady and infant; a gentleman walked by them and a train of bearers with an elder child. He very politely accosted us and begged our acceptance of seats, where their own were already placed on the bank, after contriving to tell us his name was Fitzgerald by introducing his wife as Mrs. F. They both pressed us so much to go to their house, where dinner waited, that, feeling the invitation was given in the spirit of good will, we consented, and moved towards the bungalow, where, after a few minutes devoted to the arrangement of my hair, and seeing the babies consigned to bed, we met at dinner.

We spent rather a pleasant evening, and promised to come on shore again next evening, and saw them every day until we varied our position, which the weather rendered necessary, as it was sometimes tremendous. . . .

As we were not sufficiently epicurean to remain at Budge Budge merely to eat the delicious mango fish, though very many old residents come down the river for this sole object, we moved up to Garden Reach to visit Mrs. Cleland, and if possible to come to some determination as to our future plans—a point not easily settled, as the elements both on land and sea were against our progress. We made a trip up to Calcutta, to get the newspapers and hear what was going

on. The heat there was so intolerable, that after a few hours we left it and stationed our pinnacle opposite Mrs. Cleland's house and a little below Bishop's College. We went on shore every morning at eight to join them at breakfast; Jane Allan and her child were also there and it formed an agreeable variety. There was every night a large dinner party, and as we were sufficiently intimate to do as we liked we sometimes came and sometimes stayed away. It was for that reason a very pleasant house to visit in. Yet I wish it were possible for me to impart to you a just idea of the oft-eulogised luxuries of an Indian residence at *this* season.

Let me attempt it. This is a beautiful house, and possesses every advantage, just on the bank of the river, in an extensive lawn sprinkled with cedar, teak, and mango-trees. Your first impression would be, that the house is uninhabited, as every door and window-blind is closed, and living things move not about the mansion. Even the huge kites and adjutants perch motionless on the top, the few goats and cows have hidden themselves under the shade of the banyan thickets. However as I know it is past eight, and hope and believe the bearer lies in the hall within, I venture without a chatta from the ghaut, and in despite of being half broiled, persist in my determination to be heard and admitted by the dormant bearer. At length, being inside, you take the survey of a long apartment, a table containing hats, parasols, old newspapers, and other miscellaneous articles; at each end you see a handsome sitting-room, and one side of the hall opens to the dining-room and staircase. One of these end rooms is furnished and supposed to be a library, but the most part of the books lie on the floor waiting the bearer's pleasure to dust them, which perhaps he will not please to do for a month, or until his mistress is able to come downstairs, and in the interval the

ants will have completed their destruction. Throughout the mansion is darkness visible, save that in the further drawing-room, where Miss —— thinks she is working, there falls one partial ray of light on the table. Mrs C. is still confined to her dressing-room, Jane Allan is in hers with her child, whose ayah pretends to be sick and will not nurse it. So to pass the sultry noon I possess myself of one of the vacant couches, and try with the aid of *Cyril Thornton* to beguile time. When Gray declared his idea of Paradise was to 'lie on a couch with a new novel' he evidently never tried it in India. I did feel extremely interested, until all at once I find myself almost suffocated, on looking up perceive that Miss —— has left the room, and her bearer, who thinks he has no right to benefit me in her absence, is fast asleep. As there would be no use in scolding him in his oblivious state, I find my best way is to retreat upstairs; it may be better and cannot be worse, so leaving Fenton to his fate, I proceed to Mrs. Cleland's apartment, musing as I slowly ascend the stairs, on the habits and nature of Indians, of which none who has not experienced the climate and endured the association with, can form a remote idea of. (They are indolent to excess, and from habit and constitutional temperament careless of engagements or promises, besides embarrassed by idle superstition and powerful antipathies. They present a mass of obstinate inertness; there exists not in the heart of these degraded beings any spirit of emulation or self-respect to supply the place of bodily energy.)

Mrs. C. was suffering more than myself, for she was unable to rise, and her ayah, either sick or sulky, lay in a distant room, and as there was no one within her call, she had waited for a drink until her patience was nearly lost. Having sent a bearer for her, I took off my clothes, and fortifying myself

with a book and hand-punkah spent the hours until tiffin assembled us in the parlour, and there, conversation having a little revived, we sat, lounged, or walked until five o'clock dismissed us to dress, then drive. And what a delightful feel it is here where you go out in full dress, the fresh air blowing on your neck and arms—it was no jest, though I turned it into one, when an old lady I knew in Ireland used to enumerate among the chief luxuries of India appearing thus uncovered; there is something quite intolerable in having long sleeves.

When seven o'clock again finds us in the drawing-room there is a considerable augmentation of our numbers, it is in fact a burra ~~kaunna~~. Here comes the family of —; he holds a judicial situation of some importance, and carries some of the manner thereof in his domestic association. His wife is a ladylike, quiescent personage. His only unmarried daughter seems undetermined which to be, a wit or a beauty, or passing more prudently between both extremes and dangers. There were some other strangers, but none of them impressed me beyond the moment of introduction. The appearance of the khaunsamah at the door with clasped hands and profound salaam, put us into solemn procession towards the dining-room, all with due attention to place and precedence.

I generally dine when others are at tiffin, and weary beyond measure of a state dinner, especially when the grand object is one I must not partake in; (I neither eat hot dishes nor drink champagne, my beverage being one glass of ale and water, with perhaps some curry or macaroni. Then at this season the intolerable heat, the number of servants, the ceremony of a large dinner, which the natives take such time to get through—often to sit up is all I can accomplish.) On this occasion I got into a discussion with the high man of law, which amused me in retrospect, as he evidently was so much accustomed to

lay down the law, he was wholly unused to find difference of opinion among the ladies of his own family. Some mention having been made of the literature of India, I brought the authority of Sir William Jones to support my opinion, and was somewhat piqued at the small respect with which he of the law treated the worth and talents of my paragon, and we said many bitter things with all possible good breeding. After quitting the table, Miss —— said, ‘You and my papa seemed in very animated dispute, a privilege he seldom permits us ladies the benefit of.’

Although I have nearly entered a protest against either reading or writing of moonlight scenery, as you may never have an opportunity of looking on such a night, I wish I could impart to you the feelings excited by every visible object. The dark waters of the Ganges reflecting the woody banks, even the smallest leaf found its faithful delineation, and the glittering pagodas on the opposite side just surmounted the highest branches. . . . About the house the shadows of the palm and coca-trees quivered over the grass as a faint breeze from the water now and then uplifted them. The fragrance of some nigh-blowing shrubs was exquisite; perhaps nearer they might have been too powerful. The bright and everlasting stars seemed also looking with admiration on the inferior creation of the earth.

‘Beautiful orbs of light, how many generations of men have lived and passed away since your bright rays first were reflected on this mighty river? But if you must wax old as a garment, what then am I in the scale of creation?’

I need not tell you how long, how intently I gazed on them, as thoughts and memory of other days flitted by me in sad and faithful detail.

Next evening we went off early and crossed the river, landing under my long-loved banyan-tree. I regretted the necessity of making my visit short, for although these gardens could only recall hours of grief and suffering, it is impossible to return to any place once the scene of powerful emotion uninterested. Next day being Sunday, I wished to go to church, where indeed I had seldom of late been. I almost determined I never would go at that season again. I could not catch one word the preacher said, and the dreadful heat almost reduced me to fainting. Altogether, by the time I got again into my pinnace, I was quite ill with the heat, and we began seriously to consider what our plans for the future ought to be. The river was now as hot as the land, and the Lower Provinces on the whole worse than Dinapore. We thought if we could reach it before the rains it would be better to be settled within doors, and yet the thought of returning was attended with many a pang deep and irrepressible, although I might there indulge my heart's intense desire again to visit *his* last resting-place, again and often! and once more should I meet my beloved friend Lady D'Oyly, and enjoy her society. With these thoughts I occupied my mind on our return to Calcutta, while preparing for our journey Dak to Patna.

One dreadful morning Fenton interrupted my packing and arranging, to say friends of his, Major and Mrs. Cust of the 59th, were waiting to see me. To apologise for some delay, I mentioned how I had been employed, and they both exclaimed at the madness of a person in my state of health attempting such a journey then. Major C., who seemed a particularly friendly, agreeable man, declared if Fenton took me off it must be with the design of killing me. They both pointed out Chinsurah as a good resting-place until the rains, when

we could join some detachment going by water, and make a safe and pleasant trip, especially as Fenton was not limited in time.

So my boxes were unpacked, and Fenton sent off to Havelock, a brother officer who had been appointed Adjutant to the depôt, to inquire if any accommodation was to be obtained there. Havelock I had seen on my arrival at Dinapore; he was just quitting it, but I knew him well from Blackwell's account. They had lived together. The former was very well informed, and had written a work on the Burman Campaign, which had been very favourably spoken of; indeed it was supposed that its dedication to General Cotton had obtained for him the appointment he now held. His first appearance had not impressed me in his favour, and Blackwell often combated what he called my prejudice. We shortly received his reply and assurance that there was choice of accommodation, with offers of service on the occasion, which having considered, we thought it best at once to proceed there and judge for ourselves. So behold me once more on my way to reside at Chinsurah, the spot where I spent so many happy days.

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IX

MAY 10TH—SEPTEMBER 21ST, 1828

10th May.—*Chinsurah*.—I sit again in my old position, anchored below the Commandant's House. I must try not to think of once before arriving at this well-known spot—

‘For truth itself has come to be
More strange than fiction unto me.’

We went to breakfast with Colonel Kelly, an extremely kind, gentlemanlike Irishman, considerably taller than Fenton and more robust. He has had some remains of illness brought on during the Burman war, which cramps his spirits a little; but he is on the whole what I should term a fine gallant-looking fellow. He showed me some chains he had got wrought for his daughters, and spoke of them and his little wife as if we were old friends. I thought him quite delightful. At breakfast we met Captain Enderby of the ——— Lancers, who was his guest during the day. He was, like ourselves, waiting for the rains to enable him to proceed to Meerut with his family, which family consisted of a little pale, gentle-looking infant girl, of whom he seemed extremely fond, and brought in his arms to be petted and admired. This baby and her nurse lived in a bungalow in the good Colonel's compound, and as she was but nine months old, and no appearance of mourning to denote its mother's death, I could not help wondering where she could be apart from so young an infant.

I think I now see the picture of my future life. I am too proud, if I can call it pride, to let others know I suffer, and most of my time will pass thus in flying from myself. . . .

This is my birthday! what a different sound the word had in my youthful ear; in good truth I forget how old I am to-day by the measurement of days and months; if I were to guess by feeling, the computation would be a century.

May 13th.—We have taken up our residence in a cottage which has the reputation of being tolerably cool, and have had a number of visitors. . . . There is a great change here since I left it; the establishment of the *depôt* has consequently enlarged society. In addition to Captain Enderby of whom I spoke, there is a Captain and Mrs. White, with a large family, waiting until the river is accessible. She is rather good-looking, but quite the manner of one long out of England. I was very glad after I left her room I had not four noisy boys quarrelling about me. They did not seem to disturb her much, as she consigns them all to their respective bearers and *ayahs*. I still see a good deal of Colonel Kelly, and I like him even more. . . . I much regret that it seems to be necessary he should go to some place for change of air, as his society to me is a great relief from the indifference I feel towards my general acquaintances; indeed, in the apathy of the world any one who seems to have feeling is a *rara avis* to me. I do think Colonel Kelly is more attached to a great and loving bulldog called Rasp, than many men to their wives and children. He has one son, and with such exultation he spoke of his love for his mother, and that the first money he had saved in India was devoted to purchase some little elegance he wished her to have. This dear son had been so unfortunate as to receive a *coup de soleil*, and was on his way

to England. Colonel Kelly knew my brother George very well; he was Commandant of the station he had medical charge of, and spoke of him most kindly. The smallest tie of acquaintance where persons are predisposed produces intimacy, and I felt more at home with him in ten days than I could do with others in years.

I received from my friend Campbell of the 47th a long letter, I suppose I may term it of congratulation. He inquires if I have given up my desire of visiting New South Wales. He and I used to converse for hours about that colony. He had been sent with a detachment in charge of a convict ship there, and remained some months. . . . His comparison of the climate and account of the country had often interested me highly, and I used to say, half jesting, I should certainly go there.

5th June.—Colonel Kelly is gone up the river on three months' leave, and Fenton has been appointed Commandant in his room pro temporary. The chief advantage we derive from the arrangement is the use of a spacious and airy house, of which at present I have but little benefit, as Captain and Mrs. White have established themselves in the lower part, and seem likely to remain; when the rains set in, as she was expecting to go off in a few days, and her bungalow was damp and cold, I asked them to come to my house till the boats were ready, which they did next day, since when I have never heard of boat or departure, and as she is to have an addition to her family, I begin to think she intends to remain until her confinement. It is very inconvenient, as there are persons in Calcutta to whom I am obliged, that I wished to invite here, and all my spare accommodation is occupied; besides the uproar of so many unruly children is really oppressive to one not interested in them, with bad health and weak nerves.

And I really believe they think it condescension of cavalry people to become domesticated with infantry, and their servants and mine are at war, and I am wearied to death among them. The other day, passing through my drawing-room, I found one of the boys amusing himself cutting holes in my handsome satin couches with Fenton's penknife.

Enderby, who is a professed chess player, comes daily to encounter Fenton, who is more than his match, and his sweet little girl and a nice woman who takes care of her pay me many visits; I now know why she is motherless; her parents have separated. I know not the merits of the case, but Mrs. Wilson defends her mistress; what admirable care she takes of the infant, almost bestows on it a mother's love. It displays bad taste and want of feeling in his talking of the business as I am told he does. Thus am I situated within doors; without my circle is not extensive. There is a very nice couple, Dr. and Mrs. Craigie; she is very pretty and animated, sings delightfully, and he is highly prepossessing in manner and appearance, besides being very well informed.

These were certainly the most agreeable people at the station, and I felt much inclined to know them better, but unfortunately the delicacy of my health almost unfits me for my part in society. Since the rains set in I have been continually ill, perpetual headache and feverish irritation. There is something unaccountable in the effect the return of moonlight has on me, a continual pain in my head and loss of sleep. . . . There are some large trees which skirt our compound. In these the bulbul takes his station—

‘For me the livelong night there sings
A bird unseen, though not remote;
Invisible his airy wings,
But soft as harp that Houri strings
Its long enchanting note.’

But its pre-eminent charm for me is its resemblance to the long tremulous note of the blackbird, such as I used to listen to with delight in the twilight evenings of May, from the hawthorn hedges at home.

There is one particular direction I love to drive in, afar from all passers-by and the noise of bazaars, only because the pomegranate trees are peopled by these birds, and that I can let my thoughts pursue the association without restraint. As I thus thought and listened, I heard one of those songs the dandies amuse themselves with to pass the night hours; the wild Hindoo words and wilder tones,—presently a large boat stole along and anchored at our ghaut. How vividly it recalled to me the first time we selected that spot to stop on our route to Dinapore. The romance of real life is indeed far beyond our speculation. Who would then have been credited if they told me in one year and a half I was to occupy that house with one I only knew by name, with different views, different feelings, a different name, and different nature? I was then in better health than I had known for years; if any had asked me if I had an ungratified wish, the only one of my heart unfulfilled was to meet my brothers. I recalled my beloved Niel's oft-repeated question: 'Are there any two on earth so happy as ourselves?'

'Nor dreamt of coming hours when I
Should call on him without reply,
On lands beyond the Orient wave
He only reached to find a grave.'

May not a stamp of agony be left on the heart beyond the power of Time to remove or patience mitigate. . . . It is in no wise strange that such thoughts should arise, but it is the unanticipated sources from whence they spring that is

unaccountable,—why at times and in places wholly without reference, a group of imagery, persons, places, things, start forward with a fidelity we cannot command at other times, when most disposed to commune with them; and in as much as we cannot summon, so can we not dismiss these spectres, that no exorcism can bind. And alas! with the departed often return faint and fitful gleams of the hopes, the feelings, and excitements we once shared in concert with them. . . . There is no control, no argument for such sensations, they cannot be subdued or even softened by reasoning.

Heaven knows if I am ever likely to revisit home, and if I did, would it be for my happiness or otherwise to look upon familiar objects? Where could I go, whom could I see that would not recall the past and the beloved name for ever blotted from the Book of Life? To leave India would also divide me from the one on earth most closely drawn to my heart by kindred feeling and perception; one who thinks my own thoughts and sees with my eyes, my dear James. Independent of my natural affection for him, the regard which existed between him and Campbell is another source of deep and mournful sympathy . . . I never knew Niel express the same for any other creature, not even myself, for his love for me was told by actions, by something more convincing than words, that tender approbation of my conduct and opinion, even a community with failings and prejudices which by becoming a source of amusement in some degree lost their ascendancy. In short he was a part of myself, away from him my heart lost its buoyancy, my hopes their elasticity. And into my love for James he entered with so much earnestness, many a long hour we passed away in talking of him, in anticipating a future meeting.

But it is evident, if life is prolonged, that this country cannot be our home. My only objection to leave it for any other would be leaving him behind, for there is something in the very idea of being canopied by the same sky which to one deeply attached has influence. He, poor fellow, had much cause to wish for any change, from the bad effect of the climate. . . . I told him, half in jest, we had better both go to New South Wales, and he tells me he has long been seriously thinking of it. . . . I have given him all the information I could obtain from my friend Campbell, and say that if he will join us Fenton and I will determine on it. I do not myself think there is much chance of the scheme being practicable, but it amuses for the time to write about and think of; it is something to keep in view.

Fenton talks about returning to the *depôt* in England, to which I am certainly not inclined. I could hardly put up with the annoyance of a military life at home. I fancy now I would be happier amid the untrodden wilds of Australia than pursuing the monotonous path of ordinary existence, among persons, however well meaning, still unsuited to my tastes and habits. I frequently reproach myself, and ask, Why should I differ or fancy myself different from other persons? then I muse over the caprice and inequalities of my own nature, and wonder what I *am* fitted for.

There is something in the still small voice telling of time and capacities misspent and unemployed that weighs upon my heart. Every morning I feel I am the unprofitable fig-tree, and every night that 'I have lost a day.' Yet withal I know not how to direct myself otherwise, I verily and absolutely have not a single thing to do. I have no wants to supply, no hopes to be agitated by. Life is to me as a dead calm under the equinoxial line. I cannot do any-

thing to serve or benefit another. . . . I cannot, like a happy and contemned old maid, sit working a hearthrug with my feet on the fender, my novel and my cat before me. I have no gown to make nor solicitude about my appearance in it, for I have more than I want, and am utterly careless which I look, ill or well. It is entirely impossible for any one even to fancy, at home, the lassitude and subduing effect of this climate; everything, from the hot wind to the black ant, seems congregated to annoy and molest you; it might divert you to detail accurately the life of an idle lady for a whole day, commencing at four in the morning. ✓

It is the 21st of June, to-night all your hills will be illuminated by the ancient Bale-fire. Oh! how I used to enjoy that sight, 'beneath the twilight skies of June.' . . . *You* can still look upon the hawthorn hedges, the beds of moss-rose, and meadows of clover. . . . How was it with me? I woke from the numbed sensation of my limbs—no great marvel, as it has rained heavily and blown through the open gilmils on my bed; my single covering, a sheet, is wet as well as my night-dress. Last night the air resembled a vapour bath, and every window was left open to admit of our breathing. I rise to change my clothes, everything feels chill and clammy with damp; but the sun is arising, and I get on the verandah off my bedroom. In half an hour the sunshine changes into rain and mist, the river rolls dark and sullenly along, too dark to reflect the opposite shore, now one line of dull and tangled jungle, with a few huts that now look comfortless and fragile, and scattered mosques black from the excessive rains. How very dreary! My kitmutgar brings in our coffee and communicates the loss of the red goat—died in the night from the cold; after vowing vengeance on the buckree wallah, I feel energy enough to get up and walk to and fro in the verandah,

and amuse myself in letting pieces of the chunam [*plaster*] off the wall drop in the river below.

After Fenton and I have mutually complimented one another on our taciturnity, I retreat to the couch in my dressing-room, waiting the beat of the tomtom announcing the Dak with increased anxiety, as the papers of yesterday gave notice of several English ships having arrived. No letters from England, but one from Blackwell from Dinapore, mentioning his father being appointed Governor of Tobago, and wishing him to go out to him if possible as private secretary. Oh! how fast the circle is narrowing, few indeed remain for me to love or even esteem; *for him*, 'I shall not look upon his like again,' and he, too, will most probably share the malediction that seems resting on everything I love, he will be cut off in that cruel climate. . . . After these reflections had nothing lightened my melancholy, I attempt to dress after the momentary refreshment of a cold bath, and then lie down to read *De Vere*, but am driven off my couch by the torturing of the mosquitoes, worse than ever in the rains.

'Tis eight o'clock, my breakfast appears, and a large table covered chiefly with spoons and forks; because I would not suffer my khaunsamah to charge treble, he pretends there is no fish! The bread is swarming with ants, because the kitmutgar has taken off the napkin for some purpose unknown, and when I insist on it being produced, it appears as black as ink.)

It is hardly possible to express the ways and means these servants have of tormenting and imposing on you, thus alike attacking your patience and your purse. The servants of all Europeans combine and fix a price at which only you can purchase; strive as you will, you cannot counteract this evil;

there is a host against you, and lest you should detect it, your durwan (or doorkeeper) receives a certain duty from them for excluding any but those *they* will countenance. . . . I made this discovery first from finding that the regular price of some Santipore muslin was seventeen rupees, whereas I had been giving twenty-one; on observing it to the sircar, he told me the additional four went in duty to my servants, the merchant actually receiving only seventeen. . . . When I first arrived, Captain Macdonald and my kind and faithful woman gave me memorandums of the general rate of things, and I got on very well for some time; until in an evil hour Mrs. White's servants gave mine some specimens of their system, which mightily enlightened them. She was both by nature and habit too indolent to make any exertion, and just let them charge as they liked; mine thought it becoming to show me the fashion in the cavalry, but did not find me quite so good a subject to practise on.

Some visitors appeared before we had left the breakfast table. . . . While some of these were sitting, there gathered a tremendous thunderstorm, sweeping across the river. Doors fly open, windows clap, for the bearers are at their khaunna, except the one who pulls the punkah. I then recollect having spread a box of ribbands on the table in my dressing-room, and when my visitants are gone hasten thither; but where are my ribbands, feathers, and gloves? The greater portion out in the compound, the rest twisted in the gilmils. On my writing-table lay a half-written letter beside *this* illustrious production. The gust of wind carried my letter fairly out of the window and into the river; there I stood watching it sailing off, and vainly trying to recall its contents, but this I never can, for I generally write so entirely in the impulse of the moment, I cannot arrest my own ideas for reflection.

This incident did not at all tranquillise my nerves. I walked up and down trying to bring to mind who I had written of, and repenting I could not adopt Fenton's plan never to speak of any one. He presently came in to say some of the strangers I saw at breakfast were coming to dine. . . . I felt inclined to say I am very sorry, I dread the fatigue of sitting through a long dinner, to receive utter strangers; but there being no remedy, I undressed and lay under the punkah to rest until the hour of driving.

There was seated next me at dinner a gentleman whose first appearance it was at the dépôt, having come up with a detachment without stopping at Calcutta. By way of conversation I addressed to him the usual interrogation of how he liked India, and he very naturally replied he had not yet time or opportunity to judge, but some of the customs appeared to him very strange and unbecoming. For instance on leaving the parade ground, he said, he observed a lady in conversation with some of the officers at the gate; she was driving out in the same style of dress she would have worn at a ball, her neck and arms quite uncovered, and seeming indifferent to the number of spectators. I could not repress a smile at the very honest opinion this good youth expressed of *me* unwittingly; but the rest who heard the conversation laughed so immoderately, he was completely discomposed, and all my efforts to convince him I was not offended went for nothing. He would not or could not speak again, nor did he venture even to pay a morning visit. They were a stupid, well-behaved party, and I got dreadfully weary, more especially as on looking behind the row of chairs I saw Havelock, who had retreated a little, fast asleep. This, however, was his general practice; I wonder how Blackwell could like any

one so unlike himself in temperament, and that dry sententious manner which often reminds me of George; by-the-bye, they, too, were great friends in Burmah, and he calls him a first-rate linguist.

And now this dull day is almost gone, for after these dinners I never appear again, the gentlemen smoke segars on the verandah and drink brandy pawnee. I retreat to my dressing-room and attempt to read—vainly, for the bugs and mosquitoes are past endurance, compelling me to place my lamp in the bathing-room and go to bed in the dark.

And thus has one long day been spent, or rather call it misspent, for alas! when it becomes a portion of Eternity must it not bear record against me?

24th June.—As we returned from driving I observed a budgerow near the ghaut; it had a peculiar air of disarrangement, from which I should have concluded it unoccupied, only that some kitnutgars and a dobee were smoking on the top, on which lay many articles of baggage which denoted a military inhabitant. I observed its appearance to Fenton, who hailed the manglee with the inquiry of whose boat it was: how calmly he replied, ‘Dundas Sahib, he died yesterday near Santipore.’ This information quite chilled my blood, as it was evident the unfortunate inmate must have left this troubled world alone and unfriended, perhaps neglected, when care might have saved him. Fenton gave the reins to the syce, and went on board the boat. The statement was correct; a Lieutenant Dundas left Berhampore on sick leave, intending to proceed to Europe, and died! After giving the necessary orders respecting his interment and the sale of such property as remained, Fenton returned to me, and as we proceeded I cannot describe the sickness of heart that oppressed me. I

was glad it was dark, for really in spite of every effort the tears gushed from my eyes. Although the person was utterly unknown, the idea of what he may have suffered on that deserted death-bed haunted me, besides that he may have been the object of tender affection to some heart now left desolate.

But here the character of everything is gloomy, gloomy without the imposing effect produced by the mighty relics of art, or the sublime changes of nature. We frequently pass the dwellings of rich natives, large ruinous-looking houses, looking like Mrs. Radcliffe's romances; the window frames half decayed, the walls black with damp, no pretty garden or clump of trees and shrubs, but a formal range of mango or tamarind-trees; nothing to excite the imagination. The materials are so perishable, it cannot be otherwise; these flimsy edifices are erected with brick, mud, or stucco; no dark granite walls, eloquent of the past, defying time and circumstances.

I am fully convinced our impressions of Oriental splendour are utterly deceptive. That there is beauty and costliness is very certain, but there it rests. I have seen something now of this side of India, and from what I can learn from those who have travelled much on the other, it is in essential points the same. Let any one dreaming of Persia read Forester's account of Khorasan, Ispahan, and Tiflis, all in perfect unison with what the most superficial observer may see here.

Can it be because we view even the sorrows of past time with indulgence from their belonging to years gone by, that most persons returning from this country enlarge on its beauties and attractions, but suppress its evils and heavy deprivations? In fact there are few, who, while

here, either think or compare facts { the governing feeling is either to attain some hard-won step of rank, or to amass so many sicca rupees to enable the clime-worn exile to return to England and spend them at Cheltenham or Bath in the vain pursuit of renovation. } There is an infinity more I might enlarge on, were it not that you will find it so much better told in the words and works of many travellers of discernment. I aim at nothing beyond enabling you to compare the familiar circumstances of life in India with life in England.

June 29th.—I had an unexpected meeting with an old friend yesterday. I was lying on my couch at one end of the drawing-room, which is so large, different parties might occupy different ends without either being disturbed. As I read the papers and hoped from the position of a screen I was unseen, the voice of a gentleman in conversation with Fenton fell on my ear as one I had heard before. I turned again and often, but his features were unknown, or not clearly remembered. He left the room shortly, and I asked Fenton his name; he told me—Colonel Cameron of the Buffs, on his way to Dangsipore. I felt disappointed, and said I fancied it was some one I had known. Fenton said, ‘Sit here until he returns from the barrack, and I will introduce you, and you can find out’; while we spoke, he re-entered, but as I had not just bluntness enough to say, ‘Pray, who are you?’ we conversed a little about heat and flies and boats. Still every time I looked on him perplexed me. At length on his saying something of many years spent in the army, I ventured to say, ‘Were you ever in Ireland?’ ‘Yes, for years, last in Armagh in the 83rd.’ ‘Then we are old friends, but can you remember me?’ ‘I know I have seen and heard you speak—you are not Miss Knox?’ ‘Certainly not, but I was!’ Well did I recollect Major Cameron and his wife. We had spent many days together, it

was with much interest I heard *she* was then in Chinsurah. I commissioned the Colonel to say I would go next morning to see her. How I did regret the Whites were in occupation of the house, I should so much have liked to invite them during their detention here. She was a Cape of Good Hope lady, I believe her parents were Dutch. There was something very mild and amiable, though nothing pretty, in her appearance; they had a numerous family.

30th June.—To visit Mrs. C. I accordingly set out after breakfast. There is a kind of hotel of a very second-rate order here, seldom or never frequented by ladies, a sort of lounge for billiard players; and there the whole detachment had taken up their quarters. It quite disturbed my nerves to enter the general sitting-room, disorder, litter, dust, and heat reigned. . . . The room was filled with idle young men, and the aggregate to me horrible. After some delay we found a servant to announce our visit to the Colonel, who, I believe, had gone to bed in despair, and Mrs. C. presently came, who seemed quite delighted to meet me, also introducing her daughter, a fine young woman of sixteen, whom I recollected only as a child, and for whose sake I felt doubly annoyed I could not offer them accommodation. Mrs. Cameron said gently she was miserably uncomfortable, and I repeated my regret at being unable to take them away, but begged she would spend as much of the day with me as possible, as they would find the quietness of mine (my house) a relief, and begged if I could render her any assistance a stranger always requires she would call upon me for it, as I had nothing to do and though never well, was seldom regularly confined to bed.

3rd July.—I have been making some arrangements for the

reception of Jane Allan, who has been so very ill that she has been obliged to leave Calcutta, and unless she benefits extremely by the change of air off the river here, must, I believe, go home. I must convert a small sitting-room into a sleeping apartment for ourselves, as *mine* is delightfully cool, and I wish her to have all its benefit. I begin to think Mrs. White intends to remain here while I do myself, and it is truly annoying. I had a letter from Patterson yesterday, saying that Aitkin is coming here to receive his sister who is to come in the *Juliana*. Fenton wished me to ask her to stay with me; he and Aitkin when I first knew both were not on speaking-terms, from some quarrel about straws. I had been intimate with both, and often was uncomfortable at their meeting on these terms in my house. I believe Patterson, when Fenton was leaving Dinapore to be married to me, persuaded them to lay aside this babyhouse quarrel and shake hands.

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12th July.—I have had little leisure for some time for my own concerns, few as they are. My time and thoughts have been engrossed by Jane. She is very, very ill, I think, with every indication of consumption, and that no time should be lost in sending her to sea. . . . Her child grows a fine, strong creature, and if she must part from her husband, will be a great comfort to her solitary voyage.

I am very far from well, and almost daily feel more languid and exhausted. I suffer much from pain in my side, I fancy it is what is termed spleen, though what that is I really know not. I can *see* I look very ill, and frequently can hardly stand to dress.

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17th July.—Poor James, I find, has been ill again. I do feel exceedingly alarmed at the continuation of his illness; though

he makes light of it to me, I greatly fear it is too serious, and George seems also to think so. His letter has brought back the idea of New South Wales. Oh, that we were there together ! for I am persuaded that I could be happy anywhere where he was. I might be ever sure of possessing a companion and friend. Society and solitude are but comparative expressions, there is no vacuum like that of being friendless in crowds. Fenton also seems very unwell, suffering also from pain in his side ; can *this* be called living ?

I had a large party to dine yesterday, invited to meet the Camerons, with whom I went to drive after dinner (at this season we dine more early). Fenton took Miss C. with him, and I went with her parents. After being out a quarter of an hour I was seized with such acute spasms in my side and stomach, I really thought it was an attack of cholera. The pain at intervals was so great that I had to grasp the lining of the carriage to support myself. I did not wish to say anything to alarm the Camerons, who could not *see* me from the shade of the evening. The Colonel, however, was very loud in abuse of India, so I had only to listen, or say Yes or No, while the cold moisture as of death stood on my forehead. By the time we reached my house I felt a little easier, and knowing that if I went to bed it would break up the party and produce confusion and uneasiness, I only said my head ached. Strange phrase, which means so *much* and so *little*. I found that Captain Enderby, with the idea of contributing to our amusement, had sent for some of the musicians of the dépôt, who were to sing duettes and glees ; this also was a relief, as it transferred to them the task of entertaining my guests. So, only telling Mrs. Cameron what I was enduring, I laid myself on the couch, where she sat and talked to me.

This station is quite in a bustle with the fleet of detachments proceeding up to Meerut and Cawnpore. I do wish them safely off, for I have not one moment's rest at home; even my evening drive, almost my sole enjoyment, has been interrupted by the demands on Fenton's time and attention. I waited for him, sitting in the buggy near the old Dutch fort (now an English barrack) this evening, till my patience was quite gone. And as I waited I watched the arrival of three budgerows at our ghaut. They contained the family of Bishop James whom I met at the College. If I were to do as I ought, I should ask them to come on shore to my house and rest; then I thought how much more agreeable it will be to pass the evening in reading the second volume of *Vivian Grey*, which Dr. Craigie gave me in passing.

21st July.—One of my favourite drives is to Chaundernagore about five miles off. The road is very pretty, for the most part along the bank of the river, and the town displays that neat and gay appearance which characterises all the French settlements. . . . There is something which never fails to interest me in even watching those who pass the carriage. Everything, the veriest trifles, all bespeak a race of beings so different from ourselves; some loaded with immense gourds, others with pineapples or plantains, and other articles of food abounding in every bazaar; those bazaars in themselves so unlike anything we know; how often I have wished to ransack them; . . . the curious toys for children of *all ages*, the grotesque representations of all the gods and animals that ever did or are supposed to exist; the stands with their dreadful sweetmeats, whose effluvia almost makes me faint; the naked wretch crouching over his hoard of pice and cowries spread on a handkerchief. Sometimes in the country it is more primitive

and pastoral; the herd of buffalo lying in repose, or the sacred Brahmini Bull, walking about as if conscious of his importance in bearing away the sins of some 'rude forefather of the Indian hamlet'; the little black, shining infants, sharing the same mat with the goats, quite as much the children of nature.) However, the whole forms something which lulls me into a kind of dream, a mood of reverie which, strange to say, often elicits my fondest and freshest thoughts of home and absent friends: when we stop at the door, my heart is far from India.

I received this day a letter from Mrs. Grant, giving me an account of the death of my sweet little cousin Elizabeth Gouldsbury. Dear creature, she was so interesting to me during that melancholy visit. . . . There has been some epidemic fever, most prevalent and fatal among children. In every family which I know some have been the victims.

28th July.—I returned last night from Calcutta by the road. . . . I felt sad, yet not sorrowful, having bid farewell to poor Jane and her child, who were to embark in a day two for China and England; she looked so very ill, I am certain a few months more would terminate her course *here*. It is happy that on such occasions the active business, the hurry of preparation blunt the keen edge of thought, and we imperceptibly are led to the brink of that gulf, separation, ignorant that the dreary waters of absence may be destined eternally to keep apart those who now say farewell in good hope of soon being reunited. Who can calmly speculate on the change of two years anywhere, but especially in India? I almost despair of beholding again any one once lost sight of.

1st August.—I received to-day many English letters returned from Madras. I wonder when my letters will cease to go this round, or when my own family will know where and what I

am. Among others I got one from Colin Campbell and his sister, with whom I felt so much pleased at Craig; nor have I since seen many to equal either. Their letter informs me of their grandmother's intention of removing from that residence, by the united wish of all her family. The determination appears to me a wise one; it must be to her indeed a sorrowful abode, surviving those who made life joyful. At this moment how fresh in my memory is the last look of the scene and the party we just bid farewell to, as they slowly retraced that path we had quitted for ever. How well do I remember Mrs. Campbell taking me out with her to see a lilac-tree in full blossom that Niel had brought from a distance and planted when a boy, before his departure to the West Indies.

There is something deeply affecting in the image of the aged and sorrow-stricken parent, quitting at sixty the abode to which she came at sixteen—surviving husband, children, and happiness. What a deep and solemn mystery is life, and our lengthened experience of its hopes and vicissitudes only shows the riddle more intricate. If with enlarged faculties we are hereafter permitted to view that *whole* of which the *separate* parts appear so strange and contradictory, how wonderful will be the revelation. I often think, 'Shall we then regard our present trials and disappointments as we *now* remember the tears and passions of our infancy?' I try to think steadily on this, and cease to disquiet myself in vain, feeling little interest in either the present or the future. Yet this too is a wretched state of mind. . . . Though I am not yet white-haired, I feel the blight of the heart more than many do at sixty, so many dear to me have been cut off since I left home; in the wandering of my mind I often retain the consciousness of a loss, a *void*, without recollecting the exact

extent and object. The loss of an early friend is irreparable, for though better and wiser may be found, the mystic tie of early association is wanting; as such I feel the loss of Mrs. Hart and Charlotte. I think of their being no more with sensations of the most poignant grief, they were alike the friends of my youth, and though a mother and daughter, equally companionable.

7th August.—The rains become here actually terrific. We went last night to drive, or to attempt it, for it poured just as a waterspout. Even getting from the carriage to the verandah wet me through (it penetrates through the roofs and destroys your furniture and clothes). It was too soon to dine, and too dark to read or attempt any employment. The Ganges now overflows its banks and covers part of the compound. I begin to fear it will find its way into the house, as it once did before and undermined the foundations. Yet, notwithstanding the excessive wet, the heat is unabated, and raining as it was we sat in the verandah. The only change of visible objects was now and then, on the dark and troubled mass of waters, the scattered remains of huts, straw, and trees floating by, and this was not inspiring. In defiance of the rain, Enderby came over and dined. He and Fenton spent the evening playing chess, while I tried to divert myself with an old file of Calcutta papers of about seven years old. How many names I read there mentioned as new arrivals whom I now occasionally met as wives, widows or married again and again.

Enderby made a piteous lamentation about the state of his bungalow. The rain, he said, was pouring into the baby's apartment. I felt it impossible to avoid asking him to send the nurse and child to me until the weather moderated, which he very thankfully agreed to do next morning. The nurse is such a very respectable woman, I should well like to have

such a person for myself if it were possible to meet with one.

A day or two ago as I lay on my couch the bearer came to say 'one beebee' wanted me. A soldier's wife sort of woman came into the room and announced herself to be a native of Coleraine in Ireland, and hearing by means of some passer-by from the 13th whom I had been, said she could not resist the desire she had felt of seeing a lady from her own country; the feeling was so natural, I could easily enter into it, and had a long conversation, or rather replied to many questions she put about families formerly residing there.

I will venture to say no one ever understood the full meaning of solitude unless they have felt it in India, where no familiar objects preserve a mute companionship with us, recalling the pastimes of infancy or the more fugitive pleasures and anticipations of youth. Fenton left me this morning to attend a court of inquiry on Major Greville at Calcutta. I have not remained from choice, but from feeling too unwell to keep up without being an encumbrance to him while there. He went off after an early dinner, the rain has increased the darkness of the afternoon, rain and mist *without*, dark and spacious rooms *within*, without one human face to be seen but my old bearer who sleeps on his mat without the door. I have no female servants, and as Fenton is gone, and my dinner over, my kitmutgars have begged for a holiday, which as they are only in my way I readily assented to.

There is a frame of mind in which you cannot read, when your very thoughts seem disjointed and astray! such has been mine since I saw Fenton embark at the ghaut. I have retraced the rooms in succession, then returned to that window overlooking the river, the while unconscious of what I was

gazing at, unless it was the fast stream of rain pouring off the pendant leaves of a large palm tree and forming pools beneath. At length, tired of walking, feeling faint and sick I threw myself on the couch while the gleam of twilight deepened and my bearer in the silence of the house slept too soundly to recollect it was time to light the lamps. I could not help giving way to that nervous sinking of spirits which made me weep without a cause, except the indefinable weight that oppressed me.

The evening gun just fires announcing nine o'clock and the bugle gives corresponding notice of the hour. Time changes and all things change with it, but some impressions remain with a strange and unaccountable tenacity. In how many different situations have I listened to the bugle sounding the retreat, but one impression still governs the rest; at *this* moment, in *distant India*, away from every familiar sight and sound, that lengthened note brings a whole picture in the most vivid colours before my mind—a winter's night in the home where we were all children together; it strikes on my ear with the same impression it did when I was seven years old; it gave me *then* a feeling of deep sadness. I never listened to that lengthened winding note but it imaged death and melancholy, nor was the prophetic feeling wrong; it returned in after years, realising all the undefined horrors of my infant mind, sternly true at Dinapore. I heard that lament of the bugle thrill in every fibre of my frame, when all mortal agony seemed wrought to its highest. I remembered then my childish feeling, the home from which we were all scattered, my mother's features and James's fair and delicate face, and when this momentary illusion passed and the truth of *what* and *where* I was returned, and I looked on the faces of strangers, utter strangers, I

repressed the bitter anguish that crushed my very soul and seemed calm, that I might be left only with the affectionate Eliza. I believe she then feared I was fainting, for she threw her arms round me and watched me with visible fear and anxiety; though generally her manner was most distantly respectful, *then* suffering human nature placed us on an equality.

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17th August. *Chinsurah*.—I find on looking back on these idle ruminations that on this day twelvemonth I was on the river with George near Monghir in equally wretched health and spirits. How little then I dreamed of my present situation, as much as I now do of flying, fancying *then* Madras was to be my future residence. You long ere this know why it *was not*, and perchance remember the many arguments I used to have with you on the doctrine of free agency. Every event of my life since has confirmed the belief that we are not the fashioners of our own destiny, but are compelled by circumstances into a certain track, unthought of and involuntary, which we cannot quit if we would. *Where* shall I be in a year from this day? I cannot even conjecture. It recalls to my mind one summer night at Kilderry; I sat with John and Charlotte Hart, indulging as we were wont in wild dreams and reveries; it was in 1818; we at last came to this point of deliberation, 'where shall we three be in ten years from this 28th of June?' and we eagerly agreed that if separated nothing should prevent our writing to each other on that day. But alas! one year before the expiration of that period not one of a numerous family then together remained. . . . For myself, I had lived to suffer many deaths in all those above detailed, was married a second time, a resident in India.

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But it does not require years to work much and fearful

change. Here especially, days, even hours, are sufficient; I cannot express the concern I felt last night. I was undressing when Captain Enderby sent to beg to speak with me and communicated the death of Colonel Kelly, an event which justly impresses every one who knew him with deep regret. He lately received information of the death of that only and beloved son at sea and never recovered the shock. . . . These dreadful lessons of the perils of India make me now seriously resolve to go while the power is left, but then my dearest James! if he must remain, what is safety to me?

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18th August.—I spent last night with Dr. and Mrs. Craigie; in defiance of the rain they made their way up to me, saying how much they had regretted not being able to see me during Fenton's absence, Dr. C. having been engaged in attending some patients at Chaundernagore, and she had no conveyance in his absence. They would not leave the house without me, and both seemed so attentive and kind, it repaid me for the exertion of sitting up, which actually I am now unable to do. They very cordially joined in the deep and general regret for our kind friend. . . . Dr. C. suggested to me that Fenton ought to apply for two years' leave on account of his health, which seemed to him far from satisfactory, and I then told him that we were really thinking of going to settle in New South Wales providing we got an encouraging account of it. . . . Fenton unexpectedly came in at night, the court having adjourned, and complained very much of his side. We resumed the conversation on Australia; Fenton seemed well disposed to apply for leave, while we were so far on the way. As Colonel Kelly had settled to return to England with Lord Combermere, the command of the dépôt had been promised to Colonel Everard of the 13th, who I suppose will now assume

the duties. It will be a great relief, for the additional emolument by no means counterbalanced the trouble and annoyance, to me especially, of living almost in public.

27th August.—Fenton returned again to Calcutta to attend this tedious court of inquiry; Dr. Craigie went with him and I promised to pass the evening with her. During the morning Mrs. Clark of the 47th who lives just beside us, within a call, came to see me. She seemed quite shocked to know I was alone in such a delicate state, but said that from my appearance when she met me during our evening drive she had supposed me in perfect health. This is very true, for I have always a higher colour than usual when ill, before an attack of fever particularly; indeed it makes me quite nervous to be told I look well. Mrs. Grant and I were always conspicuous by our complexion in the cold season, which I dare say would have been supposed artificial if rouge was generally worn; I don't think it would be possible, from the moisture of the climate, to keep it on; a fine complexion, being rare, is infinitely more striking than at home. I believe it was mine which made Lady Ryan speak of me as 'The pretty Mrs. Campbell' at Bishop's College and drew on me increased ill-will from my tawny companions. . . . Mrs. Clark, who is really a well-meaning woman, begged if I felt at any time inclined to see her I would send without ceremony either by day or night, and seemed struck with amazement that I had courage to remain in the house alone without even a female servant. Indeed she said so much to frighten me about my own risk, that she made me promise to send for Captain Enderby's nurse and child to stay in the house until Fenton came back. I liked both so much while they stayed, I had no objection that they should repeat the visit, and it was equally agreeable to Captain Enderby, who wished to go to Calcutta.

29th August.—As I went to lie down yesterday about one o'clock in passing through the baby's room she was running about in high spirits with a kid the bearer had brought in. I lay reading till four and then returning to my sitting-room I saw the baby on the nurse's knee, flushed and every indication of high fever; the nurse was in the most dreadful distress, saying she feared it to be the epidemic so fatal among children and entreated her papa should be sent for. I first sent off the palanquin for Dr. Craigie, who confirmed the fact and apprehended imminent danger. I think he put fourteen leeches on her chest and gave ten grains of calomel. Oh! how it bled and yet the infant's pulse did not change and no favourable symptom appeared. I know not how many changes of clothes were steeped in blood till at last the poor nurse, whose grief seemed without limit, said she would torment it no more, but let it die in peace, for no other conclusion seemed probable. Enderby returned about three o'clock in the morning and we all sat watching its inanimate form in that state of excitement and suspense which passes description. . . . The critical period and morning returned, when to the surprise of Dr. Craigie life still lingered. . . . Alas! too well I knew the sensations of those whose very soul seems to hang upon the event, what even a doubt which implies hope can produce. I was at that moment thankful I was not a mother. Most wonderfully the infant seemed to struggle all the following day, and all that could be said at night was that she was alive, if stupor can be called life. During the night she as it were awoke, knew her nurse and took some milk, but oh! so weak, so fragile. Now I really think she will recover.

Her nurse seems like a person whose reason was bewildered, she is quite hysterical and wandering. I brought her some wine hoping to compose her, and begged she would give me

the baby even while she changed her clothes, but to no purpose; she told me with bitter tears she had pledged her word to its unhappy mother to be a mother to it, and called it a judgment of God on the father for taking it from the mother, whose innocence she solemnly upholds—she, a confidential servant, *ought* to know. How could a woman of depraved mind cherish the love for her child she evidently did? As Mrs. Wilson justly said, Captain F. ought to have shunned any one who could cast aspersions on his wife they could not substantiate.

What I have observed of this woman confirms my idea that you seldom meet mediocrity among the Irish; they are generally very good or very bad; but if I had a child, I never saw any person to whom I would so readily entrust it as to her.

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3rd September.—We have received many interesting letters from James on the subject of Australia. He earnestly urges and advises our getting out of this country and declares it his fixed purpose to accompany or join us as soon as possible. *This* point settled, I have no further anxiety. I understand Colonel Everard is on his way here and this will place us at liberty.

I received this morning a note from Mr. Gough, the husband of my poor dear Charlotte, saying if agreeable he would call on me in the course of the day. How my heart throbbed at the name, indeed I should have willingly avoided the meeting. I had met him about five years before but quite forget his appearance, it was altogether so unlike the person with whom she ought to have been united. He is what would be called good-looking, but oh! how unlike Captain F——.

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Colonel Everard arrived here this morning and this must

bring our plans to a crisis. If I wished to forget the past I could not; every day awakens something of it. The last time I saw Colonel Everard was at Monghir; he evidently had not forgotten it, and for some time *I* could not compose myself. He brought me a parcel from my dear George Lawrence, which had been lying at Dinapore, a pretty Agra scarf.

What a melancholy piece of intelligence I have just heard,—the death of Captain Hemming of the 44th, very suddenly at Gazeepore. Poor, poor girl! what will become of her, utterly friendless. They lived expensively and beyond their means; I greatly fear, with every other trial, she has that of pecuniary difficulty to encounter. With an infant boy! How I wish I were settled in some place and could invite her to stay with me! The situation of these native-born young women is often most pitiable under *such* circumstances, they are alike discarded by their father and their husband's family, and being left without an independent provision, I can hardly fancy a more dreadful situation, especially if they go to England, for what can they do there, generally unfitted by their birth and education to retain a place in their husband's class of life? These marriages are unfortunate for both parties and seldom turn out otherwise. I felt absolutely shocked the other day when Dr. Craigie pointed out to me a brother of Charlotte Gouldsbury's almost as black as my bearer; he is what is called a Kranee, or native writer. Poor Frank, if anything befalls him, which may heaven forbid, what an associate for his elegant mother would she be!

7th September.—I have been so busy for some days past, writing letters about Australia, I have done little else; indeed every day the necessity for getting out of this country seems more imperative. I have hardly strength to sit up an hour

in the day and am suffering such cruel sickness, my life is truly a burden to me. I am quite certain if I do not get away from India before my confinement, I shall die, and where to go I know not, unless it be to New South Wales and make the Isle of France our route, where if it were a matter of necessity, I could remain till after my confinement, and where James could meet us if he can now accomplish obtaining leave. Besides the state of my own health, the difficulty of bringing up children here is so great, any other place or situation would be preferable.

The Governor and Lady Bentinck visited the dépôt yesterday morning. He is a very plain-looking old man; her appearance is more dignified. It is said he is sent here to retrench; if it is so, they will not be popular. I believe as private characters they are very amiable and religious; it would be something new here to make religion fashionable.

15th September.—We have settled to remove to Fort William until we come to some fixed plan for future movements. When Fenton was in Calcutta, Captain Bruce made him promise to pay them a visit, which we can do while our quarters in the Fort are getting ready, and the season is now at hand when it is really pleasant, as far as any place or season can be pleasant to me, suffering as I do.

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SEPTEMBER 22ND—DECEMBER 13TH, 1828

22nd September.—Ballygunge.—It is about two years since first I saw this place, then the residence of Jane Allan. . . . In the present weak state of my health and irritability of my nerves I ought not to have come here, and would give anything to be gone; everything I see recalls some painful story.

Captain Bruce goes off to Calcutta after breakfast and Fenton generally with him. Mrs. B. like all ladies of her country is never visible until evening, so I wander about listlessly for hours, hardly conscious of anything around me. There is a young English lady here, a pleasing person, but she too seems depressed and silent, and we are too much strangers to be any relief to each other; besides, the source of my unhappiness is one which will not bear communication with a stranger. She sees I am ill, and is courteous and attentive, then she goes to her dressing-room and I to mine.

As I lie on my bed I can see the windows of the room we formerly inhabited, if I look over the compound I retrace those walks that at daylight we used to tread together. Oh! with what elastic spirits, at the earliest dawn, I used to hurry on my clothes, to enjoy the splendour of an Eastern sunrise, where everything was matter of curiosity and interest . . . I have sung there from perfect lightness of heart, and though Niel's spirits were never high he was ever cheerful and shared

the slightest excitement on my part. How well I remember our very words of mirth and his attempts to restrain my spirits, lest they should exhaust my strength. The very tree and branch still bends there, from which he once pulled the crimson blossoms to dress my hair at night. Yonder lies a spot of rough and marshy ground over which he *would* carry me, lest the damp should reach my feet.

It is in a well-assorted marriage that love is found in its best and most exalted form. The zeal for another's happiness that subdues selfishness and inspires disinterestedness, brings its finest impulse into action and elicits all the better feelings of our nature. Can *I* now look back without emotion on the memory of a man whose soul was one passion for me, absorbed by the sole desire to render me happy, from the day of our marriage to that of his death? I cannot call to mind one difference of opinion, the similarity of our sentiments and perceptions ever made me feel as if we had grown up together. Vain as all such recollections *now are*, at present they come unbidden, and you, I know, will regard them with pity and indulgence. . . . Had this loss been sustained at an *earlier* period when my feelings were more elastic, they might have been imperceptibly directed into another channel, even though the pain of separation had been as vehemently felt at first. Now it is too late, the wreck of my own mind has been completed, I sigh over the past and exclaim with stern Belfour :

‘ Yes, God and man might now approve me
If thou hadst lived and lived to love me.’

It is indeed true that grief makes us selfish, else would I not, even knowing your forbearance, trespass thus far on it.

Let me try to divert my own mind and yours by some mention of the persons whose guest I now am, which I can

do without infringement of the right of hospitality, as there is very much to like in both. Though politeness would present the lady first, I begin with Captain Bruce, whose story is by much the most strange and various of any, the facts of which I *know* to be true. He was born in India; his mother, I believe, was of native extraction. I fancy his first career was in the navy, but not being accurately informed of the succession of events, must briefly narrate, that his perils may justly bear comparison with those of Saint Paul; in peril at sea, on land, in peril of robbers, of travel in the desert, in weariness and hunger, with imprisonment among the Arabs; after all these miseries being the possessor of power and wealth, holding for a long time the situation of resident at Bushire. I have made great way in his good graces and he promises to let me see a journal of this part of his life. . . . He is a man of extensive reading and very accurate observation; has contrived during one or two visits to England to form an acquaintance with some of the distinguished characters of the day; Sir Walter Scott for instance, I understand, has seen and much admired the journal in question.

Now for the lady, who was born at Shiraze, a place celebrated by the poet Hafiz in his amatory and anacreontic verses. I might have acquired a practical knowledge of the excellence of the wine he celebrates, as Bruce piques himself on having it genuine, only that just now I have an aversion to wines of all kinds and colours. Mrs. B. was born of Armenian parents, by whom you are aware Christianity is professed. She was at twelve years old a beauty according to the Persian taste, and Captain Bruce repeatedly offered to marry her. The proposal, however, was disapproved by her parents until the fame of her charms reached the Prince of Shiraze, who sent his Vizier to intimate that he meant to

admit her to the honour of his harem, and requiring her to be delivered up to him. Her mother, who considered any lot preferable to her being the property of the Prince, shaved her hair, and eyebrows, blacked her face and packed her up in a basket, sent her off to a friend at Bushire, consented to her marriage with Captain Bruce as the *least evil* of the two; then bribed the Vizier, who was a relation, with six thousand rupees, to take with him a younger girl of five years old, and present her to the Prince as her *only* daughter. Her age, however, not suiting the Prince's taste, she was returned.

It is strange that after living twenty-seven years with a very well-informed man Mrs. B.'s mind should remain a blank page, though naturally gifted with intelligence. I am not sure if she reads English, nor can I discover how her time is appropriated; all I know is, she appears about four o'clock, very well, and often richly dressed, is extremely kind and attentive, and steps into her carriage to take her evening drive. On returning, our chairs are placed before the door, where we sit till dinner is announced, at which she seems most anxious for the comfort of her guests, and during the evening is very conversable and lively, sometimes contributing to the general amusement by singing 'Taze bu Taze' or some other national song, and certainly to me her originality is infinitely amusing.

28th September. *North Building, Fort William.*—I am now very comfortably settled in pleasant apartments here, and should be well pleased to stay all the cold season. It is, I suppose, one of the finest forts in the world, a little military city, the barracks forming squares, the centre grass kept in such perfect order, there is not a weed or a straw to be seen,

not even a goat or a dog, nothing save the gigantic adjutant, who seems Commandant of the ground.

There is, as you may suppose, at all times abundance of society to be found here. I do not meet any others I like so much as Major and Mrs. Cust. The first day I came here they had previously engaged we should spend with them, and there I also met Mrs. Hemming, towards whom they evinced the utmost feeling and attention. It was indeed a trying meeting to us both, but she bore it best . . . seeming unconscious, too, of the disadvantage of the perceptible trace of native origin, both in herself and her child. I understand she has a brother, or half-brother somewhere in India, an indigo planter, who asked her to come to live with him, and this she refused; if I dare do it, I would earnestly advise her remaining in India.

7th October.—What have I been doing for the last two days? I hardly know. A considerable part of the time has been engaged with Mrs. H., whose quarters are near mine. Most deeply do I feel for her, but alas! what is unavailing pity in her case? The weather is now very delightful and admits of going out with comfort, but I do not feel any alleviation of my own miserable sickness and depression; my only moment of relief is during my evening drive; I think I am the first who crosses the drawbridge and among the last to return, not that there is a human soul to interest me, but the change of air and objects divert the sombre current of my ideas. I cannot attempt a drive in the morning; the most I can accomplish is to put on my dressing-gown and go to sit on the top of the house, which seems a favourite promenade with many others as well as myself. I sit with my book, and Fenton walks about eating oranges, which are one of

the best fruits here, though much inferior to those we get in England. Captain Aitkin is also living here and a daily visitor.

As we were at tiffin a few days ago I heard a well-known voice inquire for Fenton, and presently my old friend Mr. Phison entered; I had not seen him since we parted at Ballygunge. His long intimacy and friendship for Niel, by whom I was first introduced to him, as well as his regard for my brothers and the affectionate interest he felt for me, all united to agitate me beyond the power of subduing its expression. I could not remain at the table, but after striving to become calm in my dressing-room, I sent to say I wished to see him there; when he took my hand the agitation of his own made the half-dried tears gush again, and his voice faltered when he attempted to offer some word of consolation; 'Your loss has been mine,' was all he could articulate, and though he sat with me long, neither, I believe, spoke two sentences. Poor fellow! how changed he was also; I thought of the handsome, spirited young man that used to visit me at Kilderry, and bring to me many a letter from Niel. How I thought of dear Eliza Hart, who thought and believed his interest in me arose from personal affection and would not be convinced to the contrary; and how she admired his manner and appearance. He left me, promising to return to breakfast next day, as he had much to tell me of James, with whom he had spent a long time at the Nilgherry hills.

Fenton has been appointed Brigade-Major of Fort William in the room of Major Greville, who is suspended. Even if the situation were permanent it would not induce me to remain in India beyond the cold season or indeed beyond February. We have now finally determined on going to New

South Wales, and also that Fenton will sell out. There is no prospect now of promotion, and to wander about the depôts of country towns of England with a family would not suit me. James is so fully resolved to join us that we think an application for leave is but waste of time; if we go at all it ought to be done at once. My situation is certainly a serious difficulty; I cannot venture on the direct voyage there, so must of necessity take the first favourable opportunity of going to the Isle of France. It is a place I have long desired to see, and may be termed classic ground consecrated by the genius of St. Pierre; who hears it named without also thinking of the mountain cottages, the Valley of the Tomb, the fatal Isle of Amber? What interesting descriptions my friend Colonel Edwards used to give of it; . . . he was one of the gifted few, who view every scene with the eye of taste.

I paid Mrs. Cust a long morning visit and almost coveted her lovely babe of two months old. I told the Major we were going to leave India for Australia, and could not for a long time convince him it was true, but when we did he very cordially entered into our projects and almost inclined to follow our example. . . . It is truly amusing the astonishment which people express when they hear our intention; certainly if I were going off in a balloon to visit the stars they could not deem it more extraordinary; if I was to be laughed out of anything it would be of this, as it is a standing jest with our visitors, Aitkin especially, and every one who knew Fenton, as he was considered such a determined military man, that he could only exist in a red jacket. It is quite amusing to see the faces of some when we speak of it, and yet every one agrees he or she would wish to leave India.

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15th October.—I sat on the top of the house all this even-

ing—Fenton being absent—and witnessed that most sad of all sights, a military funeral conducted with all that mournful pomp particularly bestowed on those of its higher rank. It was a spectacle that from my very infancy I never could support, and surely it must be these are feelings of prescience rooted in us of which we know little, even while under their dominion. The solemn pageantry of martial music and procession is at all times imposing, but especially *there*. We see the end of honour, courage, fame, ambition, idols to which the soul bows in homage, all trampled under foot together. I know not if the actual ceremony of interment affect other minds as it does mine, or is it a peculiar weakness? I cannot support it.

24th October.— . . . Miss Aitkin has made her appearance; she is a fine girl, at least in India; she has a fine colour and is youthful and animated, with agreeable manners. Being in the next house to mine she is very much with me; in short between visitors at home and going out I have very little time for you or myself, although there is little of interest to communicate.

I went to call on Mrs. Bogle at Hourah, where she is staying with some relations. She was so much loved by Lady D'Oyly that I felt anxious to pay her the attention of calling, though I saw so little of her when we were almost living together. Her husband is a very nice young man—they seem truly happy! *Now* is their time!

/ Like many other Europeans I had a violent curiosity to see a Nautch. These native assemblies are much frequented about Calcutta, but I am told the true Hindoostanee nautch, as it is exhibited in the higher provinces, is such as no lady

could witness. To *this* Fenton was extremely unwilling I should go, but all his assurances that I should be both disgusted and disappointed, failed to convince *Jemima Aitkin* and myself; go we must and did. I fixed a night when I understood many English ladies were invited. The party dined with me, and one of the gentlemen undertook to be our guide, but unfortunately the potency of the bumpers of champagne he despatched so bewildered his memory on our way to the house of Roupe Loll Mullock—which was supposed to be three miles off and through lanes and dilapidated streets difficult of access even by day,—that I really despaired of ever reaching the place.

I ought to remind you that it is on these occasions the natives delight to display their wealth, and they consider it a great addition to their importance to have European guests. The poor animal who exists on rice and ghee all the year, contented with the mat for his bed, here may be seen playing the liberal entertainer.

These houses are generally narrow buildings surrounding a square, which on these gala nights is canopied by scarlet curwah, so that on entering what is only an open court you might suppose it a vast and lofty apartment. Well! after driving furiously to different houses all lit up in the same style, as fast as horses could take us on, the glare of lamps, the rapid motion of the multitudes moving round us almost bewildered my brain,—I heartily wished to be set down in any place—and after much toil and loss of time we discovered the entrance to Roupe Loll Mullock's house thronged with carriages of every description.

We were either too late or too early, for very few Europeans were to be seen, the benches were filled by half-castes, and not liking to seat ourselves with them, we walked about that

room in all directions until accosted by a grim native or baboo, attired in fine Dacca muslin with a beautiful necklace of topaz. After presenting his sons, one a young man, the other a boy in trousers and vest of kinkab, he brought forward an odious specimen of Hindoostanee beauty, a dancing-woman, for my special gratification, but such a wretch,—dressed in faded blue muslin bordered with silver, put on in some fashion passing my comprehension. It appeared at least twenty yards, rolled in every direction about her, the ends brought over the shoulders and hanging down before, her hair falling wild about her face. She was dressed in good keeping for a mad woman.

The musicians then commenced a native air, merely a repetition of four notes; she advanced, retreated, swam round, the while making frightful contortions with her arms and hands, head and eyes. This was her 'Poetry of motion'; I could not even laugh at it. Our host still persisted in his resolution to be agreeable, which was so tormenting as he had not an earthly thing to say. His little boy solemnly walked after him as if conscious that he was part of the show. I tried to converse with him, but he glanced at me as a very suspicious character through his half-shut yet magnificent black eyes. These were the only members of the family we saw, as you must not even suppose the existence of daughters or wives.

Happily some other English visitors entered, and our dark friend quitted us to make his salaam to them. There was but little to see that could please a European eye, the only object at all extraordinary was at the top of the room, raised by a flight of steps higher than our apartment, a gigantic image of his God—I forget who, Seiva or Vishna,—astride on a peacock; a jolly-looking God he was, with staring black

eyes, pink and white cheeks and a curled head and whiskers, oh! so like those wig blocks you see in the window of a tailor or hairdresser; it was with the utmost effort I resisted laughing in the very face of him, the patron of the festival. /

After we left this house we drove to another, where two young men with really very good manners received us, but the style of the thing is the same at all, though these had some undefinable appearance of being of higher caste. They were splendidly dressed, and the eldest wore in his turban a single feather, so like the plume of the heron which marks the supremacy of the Highland chieftain. They insisted in regaling me with the odours of sandal-wood and other incense, but the smell of pawn oil and scents beyond description, the glare of a double row of brass chandeliers placed on the ground, and consequently on a level with the eye, almost made me faint, and, long before we could get at our carriage, seek relief in the street; so that I drove home cured for ever of all curiosity respecting native entertainments; indeed the only agreeable impression I bore from thence with me was the voice of a Circassian girl, or as I thought an European disguised, but be she what she may, the song of 'Taze bu Taze' was very sweet.

31st November.—I was much amused to-day by an accidental visitor, a Mr. K——, of the —— Regiment, going home in very bad health. . . . He came to the Brigade-Major's office about some papers and accounts . . . having left his family at some other part of the city, and as Fenton was aware of his precarious state, he wished to save him a second visit to the fort, and asked him while waiting for the papers to take tiffin, and rest in the drawing-room. He observed that as I was also an invalid he might do it with less ceremony.

I was lying on my couch when the bearer ushered him in with a chit from Fenton, saying who he was, and wherefore he sent him upstairs; indeed this face and figure (though particularly gentlemanlike) told a tale of suffering which at once excited my interest, so I requested he would rest on the couch opposite mine until tiffin was ready; being both invalids we should not disturb each other. I gave him the paper to read, but insensibly fell into conversation; the regiment he belonged to I had once known well, and in mentioning different names he, among others, repeated that of a person I had in days of yore been full well acquainted with, but for some time had lost sight of. I asked where he was and why he had left the corps. He replied that he could not exactly say; he had heard he was attached to a lady in the north of Ireland; some said she had not treated him well; he did not himself know the particulars, but that he seemed very much depressed lately. The lady he understood to be the daughter of a clergyman, her name was Knox! As he proceeded in his tale I really felt my ears tingle, to be told so gravely a story about myself; I felt vexed, and yet I could have laughed at the coincidence and how little he suspected my identity; I was almost going to tell him, but could not manage it.

As I drove out of the fort I met my old acquaintance Captain Forbes, who had been for some months at sea for his health. I did not recollect him till he had passed, though I am sure he did me, and will very injuriously think I *meant* to cut him. I know not if it be pre-occupation of mind or delicacy of health, that renders me so forgetful of the names of persons I know perfectly well. . . . It is quite a matter of torment to me, officers coming in on business to Fenton, to whom he introduces me, and of whom I retain no recollection; then when I meet them on the Course in the evening, I pass

without a bow, and they consider it an intentional incivility. Fenton generally serves as my prompter, and, 'Bessie, there is a gentleman you know,' keeps me tolerably straight while we are together, but if I go out alone, I try to look straight before me for fear of offending somebody.

Not long since, the Craigies came to town to make purchases and asked me to go with them, to see some articles of silver and china they were divided upon. Off we went and spent the morning in the town and bazaars. I got so tired going up and down stone steps, that just when the day was over, they having gone up to see some things in the China bazaar, I, worn out, seated myself on a morah in the entrance. As these passages are generally filled with the commonest sort of merchandise, and crowded with palkee-bearers and attendants, it is not a usual place for a lady to sit. Quite conscious of this, though compelled by fatigue to stay, I sat looking over an advertisement of sales, which had been pushed into my hand in Leyburn's auction-room. The day before as I sat with Jemima Aitkin, her brother brought in two gentlemen and introduced them to us; they remained during tiffin and we conversed for some time. Now as I sat in Mulluck's bazaar, on looking up I saw a gentleman stand looking steadily and disagreeably at me; his face was quite familiar, and it struck me that he was one of the young men I had seen the day before, which belief was strengthened by his looking as if he expected to be recognised.

The *longer* he stood and the *oftener* I looked to see if he were yet gone, the stronger grew my perplexity, at last he made a move to go off, and then by way of doing a *meritorious* act, expecting I might meet him again with the Aitkins, I made him a slight bow. But, to my dismay he checked his steps, advanced to where I sat, and began to talk with a familiarity

which annoyed me considerably. To get free of him I turned to Mulluck, and asked him if he had fresh pine cheese; I just recollected that we had a large party, and the khaunsamah had told me there was none. While I was paying my five rupees for it, the stranger very familiarly took hold of my purse and said, 'What can you be buying cheese for?' I felt my face glow a little with displeasure, but tried to be cool and answered, 'My husband is too much engaged to come with me, and he never allows the natives to judge in this article for him.' His next question: 'And pray who may *your* husband be?' convinced me I had addressed an utter stranger, who naturally thought I wished to encourage his familiarity, so I started up and forgot all my fatigue, till I joined the Craigies, who were yet undecided between brown and green china. When we descended together the gentleman was still in waiting, yet I could not be offended justly, as *my* bow had drawn the attack.

In the evening, Captain Aitkin was riding by the carriage talking with me, when a curricie passed with two young men; one of them spoke to Aitkin, whom I recognised to be the 'He of the bazaar.' I said to my companion, 'For goodness sake, do tell me who that young man is!' and I proceeded to tell him of the meeting in Mulluck's shop. Aitkin laughed violently and said, 'He is a young writer, and I shall have capital sport with him.' He rode off before I could add a word. When we met at dinner he said: 'I went after Mr. —, and told him, the Brigade-Major was so extremely angry at his having insulted his wife, he was going to call him out. He vowed he had never spoken to Mrs. Fenton in his life, did not even know her by sight. "What! do you say you did not take her purse in Mulluck's bazaar this very morning?" "Mrs. Fenton! was *that* Mrs. Fenton? I saw a lady who seemed

highly rouged, and who from sitting there alone I really never supposed to be any one's *wife*; besides, I thought she bowed to me. I am quite distressed, shall I go and apologise to them, or will you?" I told him you were too angry to listen to an apology, and that he had better keep out of Fenton's way. He was trying to find out your name.'

I could not help being amused, though I did not wish to carry it quite so far, especially as I saw next time he passed that he wheeled off as quick as possible; it was from seeing him constantly on the Course I fancied him an acquaintance.

5th November.—A grand ball at Government House was the only occurrence that I recollect out of the general routine since I wrote last; it was expected to be very well attended, as a number of English ships had landed, I suppose, a greater display of pretty and ladylike girls than had been seen before in Calcutta at once; of course the display of French and English finery was in the same proportion. A great number of these girls had just left school, and to them the ball and introduction within the mystic circle of society was a joyous event, while to us, who had before experienced the tedium of such assemblies, it was regarded more as a species of *endurance* than of *enjoyment*.

Be this as it may, the crowd was immense. Miss Aitkin, who was one of the novelties of the season and perhaps among the best, accompanied me. Dr. and Mrs. Craigie just arrived from Chinsurah, as Jemima and I had left the dining room to commence our toilet, and she had the disadvantage of dressing in haste and confusion, but looked, notwithstanding, what she must ever do, very pretty,—though not gifted with expedition on these occasions, which put Jemima's patience to a severe trial; as *her* dress was ready as it had left Regent Street, and

well became the wearer. She naturally thought delay and disappointment were inseparable, and often urged me to come off and leave Mrs. C. to her husband's escort. This, however, in my own house I could not do, and after all the vexations of a hasty toilet we set out.

The length of the verandahs and the flights of stairs almost wore me out before we reached the principal reception room. It was thronged to excess, and seeing there was little probability of making our salaam to Lady Bentinck, I gladly took possession of a vacant couch, as Jemima rather wished to look around her than to dance. (The *coup d'œil* of these rooms is indeed calculated to impress a young person with delight, particularly when filled by a brilliant assembly. The dress and splendid ornaments of most of the married women, and the elegance and fashion of that of the girls just arrived, on whom we all know their friends spare no expense, combined with the beauty of very many of those present, rendered the assembly particularly striking.)

Yet at all times of my life, my ball-room musings have been melancholy, and here particularly so, viewing so many gay happy creatures, happy in their ignorance of the future, and that indefinable delight which attends a first introduction to the novel habits of a foreign country; happy too and encouraged by the presence of admiring parents and friends. Alas! to all these what a gorgeous dream is their coming life, thus ushered in. But how many of its bright tints must wane into clouds and darkness even before one year has passed over them!

Among the throng I saw Gough! very assiduous in his attentions to a very pretty girl, looking as if poor Charlotte

had never been; there was also Frank Gouldsbury, conspicuous by his wife's appearance, as there were only two half-castes among that numerous assembly that I could see. Dear Frank looked so little like himself, so ill-assorted in being thus accompanied, it made me truly sorrowful; indeed neither of these parties could fail of awakening painful memories, one of the *dead*, the other *for* the living!

We dined with a Mr. and Mrs. Dickens, that had once been in the 33rd with James; he likewise left the regiment and came to India as a lawyer. He spoke with much interest of him, and although ill able, I accepted their invitation. He is a particularly pleasing, gentlemanlike young man; she is pleasing in manner but in no wise pretty. There was a large party, and I dare say I might have supposed it agreeable at any other time, but I was so overcome with sick faintness before I had sat two minutes in the room, that I repented of having made the attempt; everything swam round, wall-shades seemed whirling round the apartment, and tables dancing. Mr. Dickens stood by my couch, talking of James. Happy for me that it was *his* vocation to talk, for *Yes* and *No* were all I could articulate, and when he took me into dinner I truly could not see my way, but trusted to the guidance of his arm. Fancy the misery of being thus seated during a repast which seemed interminable, being entreated to eat, taking platefuls of everything offered, and letting it go untouched. I was thankful to accept of some iced champagne as a momentary stimulus although infinitely worse after it was taken. I said to myself, 'I cannot sit up another five minutes, if I rise up to go or if I stay and fall on the floor it will alike produce confusion. Oh! that I were at home!'

With such cogitations I was engaged until it pleased

Providence that Mrs. Dickens did bow her intimation to me to move. I actually got out of the room and to the first step of the stairs,—then lavender water and harts-horn, and ayahs, and bearers all were summoned, and by their aid, I suppose, I was transported to the couch in Mrs. D.'s apartment, where she sat most kindly striving to revive and assist me. When able to speak, I attempted to tell her what I had endured during the last two hours, and assuring that only lying down and quietness could relieve me, at length persuaded her to divide her attention with her other guests. So I lay there, ruminating on the accumulated misery of a burra khaunna, the inconvenience of my voluminous gauze dress, the pain of my head from combs and pins and bows of hair, in fine of my general suffering, and the agony of my small satin shoes, knowing that if I took them off they must remain off, the swelling of my feet being so distressing. At last when 'our hour was come,' after venturing to stand and drink a cup of coffee, I blessed Heaven to be in my palkee at full length, pulled all my combs out, threw off my shoes, almost undressed myself, flung my pretty necklace and earrings on the mat, and shut my eyes until put down in my own verandah, where after muffling my shawl over my disarranged dress I regained my couch, which I am almost vowed to quit no more, at least for large parties.

17th November.—I often ponder over the strange variety of sorrows which have mingled in my cup, and cannot recall any period when suspense and agitation have been more severe than for some time past, and this must ever be the case where you have taken any step involving the interest of any other or been instrumental to their doing it. All this do I feel with respect to Fenton's selling out, as he yielded to it less

from his own wish than his desire to gratify me and to enter on a plan of life which would include James and ensure his removal from India. . . . The whole measure was designed and expected to be mutual and being for the benefit, necessarily demanded the aid, of all. Under this impression Fenton took those steps which cannot be retracted, and when too late to recede, fancy my amazement to receive a letter from George, saying that James's joining us was very uncertain. He *might* or he *might not*; we had better make our arrangements without reference to them.

I was stupefied, as it was for the express object of being together that Fenton resolved on selling out, and he seemed so much hurt by this versatility,—indeed the idea of going alone never once entered into his thoughts or mine, for I over and again urged James to *determine*, as if he did not decide on Australia, we *should* on returning to England. My first impulse was to make Fenton apply to the Commander-in-Chief to cancel the sale of his commission, although I fear the application is too late. He has done so; I am in most anxious excitement as to the result, and it would be hardly possible to give you all my reasons.

In the first place it may make a difference to Fenton of £1000, beside the loss of his present appointment, if he now leaves the regiment, and he may even resign his profession for little or no purpose. By these delays the time of my confinement becomes so near that I may not be able to encounter the voyage. . . . Altogether, I never felt so perplexed and uncomfortable,* my present situation renders it most trying, I am often thankful Fenton is not aware of how much I have to fear. At this moment I heartily regret I ever spoke of Australia, for otherwise I should have been settled at Dinapore, or on my way to England. If we do not

leave Calcutta before February we cannot hazard a voyage in the Indian Seas, the hurricane will then oppose us. The hot season is come here, and God only knows which of us may be the victim.

I wonder if James and George ever took this view of the subject, or, indeed, if they ever have thought of it at all. Oh! when shall I cease to be led away by my impulses and take reason for my guide? it is full time, when my influence has so narrowly affected Fenton's interest; at least *this* lesson shall be to me a lasting one, and I will endeavour to profit by it, even should my present uneasy feelings be removed. Of all others I should be slow to deceive myself with delusive dreams and expectancies.

22nd November.—I often catch strange glimpses of those I have met before, which leave me sad and thoughtful. I went this morning alone to the Burra Bazaar to look for some things I could not well describe or send for. It is of all places in Calcutta the least likely to meet an acquaintance in, or where a lady is ever seen. It is a place wholly beyond describing; the lanes are dark, narrow, and filthy, filled with the effluvia issuing from the dens (for I cannot call them houses) of the natives, and they too look barbarous, half-naked, and as if on the watch to take hold of you. There is a kind of market-place covered over and divided into separate stands; they are perfectly wonderful to an European. There are heaped on one board all sorts of shoes, slippers, sandals to suit the native taste, pointed, and turned up some inches; next, perhaps, are heaps of native bangles, necklaces, coral, cornelians, and sometimes you get very beautiful things here for almost nothing. Then all the wonderful specimens of boxes, lacquered work, playthings, shells of all possible variety

and hues, miniature casts of the native gods and sacred animals, feathers, flowers, china, silks, chintz—in short, I should amazingly like to fill a waggon indiscriminately here, and after, amuse myself for a year looking over its contents.

Well, after quitting this strange abode of human creatures and their contrivances, as my bearers trotted on I saw standing in a doorway a face so like Dr. Rhodes of the *Cornwall*, that I started at what I supposed the resemblance, but never for a moment believed it to be the same, when the palkee stopped and he stood before it, like a vision! for in this hasty recognition I found he was going out of Calcutta, and I should most probably have left it before he returned. Of course little could we say during that brief meeting as he stood uncovered in the hot sun, and my words were incoherent from the multitude of ideas excited by his sudden appearance. It was strange that he knew me in the glance of a moment. He had been ever extremely attentive to me, but I had not given him credit for the strong feeling he now displayed. As he was going I said, ‘And is this all, I am ever again to see or know of you?’ He pressed my hand with a degree of energy which brought a flood of tears to my eyes, and seeing it did me little good to prolong the interview, he bid the bearers go on.

When I returned, Fenton was still absent, and the vacant rooms had an aspect of loneliness which oppressed me so much, I actually could not sit down. I called again for the palkee, and went to fly from my own thoughts in paying some visits. The first was to Mrs. Cust. At her request I went to her dressing-room, where she was drying her hair after the operation of washing it. She was as usual extremely agreeable, and having nothing to do elsewhere, I took off my bonnet and lay down on the couch. She perceived that I was agitated, and asked with much kindness if it arose from illness. I told

her the simple fact, adding that I earnestly wished to have more command over my own feelings, but the more I strove the less I succeeded.

She replied, 'I may tell you *now* that you have mentioned the subject,—before we met, I had a strong wish to know you personally; I felt so much interested for you from hearing the young men of the 47th and 59th, who joined us at Berhampore, speak of you and Captain Campbell, and the strong affection visible between you during that voyage; that he seemed miserable if apart from you, and so devoted in attention, he watched every word you spoke, more like a lover than a husband, and seemed to consider you alike without an equal or a fault; that they could not fancy any other so much to be pitied in being alone; your tastes, ideas, and feelings were so congenial. Mrs. Hemming has frequently said the same, and dwelt on your love for him and his devotion to you.'

These were sorrowful truths, and yet I had not been aware that our sentiments had been so apparent to others; it shows when persons are much interested in each other, how little they are conscious of the observation of bystanders.

27th November.—As I sat writing to Patterson lately, Jemima Aitkin was working by my side, and it suddenly occurred to me she would be a very nice wife for him, so I gave him a faithful description of her and told him instead of bemoaning his celibacy at Dinapore to come to us and try to excite a prior interest in her good graces before she was appropriated by some one else, which would certainly be the case ere long. I have just received from him a most vehement letter, coming *at once* into the proposal, beseeching my influence with the lady, and declaring that my good opinion

was sufficient to determine him; reminding me that this was not the first time he had placed his fate in my hands! I felt at first a little startled, but on considering the matter, and with perfect good will to both, I really do think they may be very happy and are well suited. I know few men with whom a sensible woman might get on more tranquilly than with Patterson. He is well informed; his manners are agreeable, and his temper and disposition good, I am sure it would be as good a match as she can make: of course to her I have not mentioned the matter, it is much better they should meet as unprejudiced persons. But I told Aitkin, and he said she should please herself, though it was to him evidently very agreeable:—now if *this* turns out ill I shall have a heavy responsibility.

I read in the paper of yesterday of the arrival of Mrs. Grant's two daughters, whom she had so anxiously expected. They were to come out with the Rev. Thomasin and his wife. I accordingly set off to call on them at the Bishop's Palace where I understood Mr. Thomasin was to remain. I asked for the young ladies and was shown upstairs, where to my amazement I met their mamma. She had hastened down to receive them, and only arrived the day before. She seemed really delighted to meet me, and introduced me to the girls, who seemed not a little surprised to see their mamma bestow so many embraces on a stranger. They were both extremely pleasing and lady-like; the eldest, Mrs. Grant told me, was to be married to Mr. Thomasin's eldest son, a fine young man. She had in early youth accompanied him to India and they were shipwrecked; during that hour of trial Mr. T.'s care and kindness had strongly attached her to him. She told me that the idea of the young people being united had been

a pet scheme of hers from the time they were born, though she never had spoken of it. A very nice couple indeed they were; he, tall, handsome, and intelligent, about twenty-four; she, eighteen—that happy age!

I did most heartily enter into Mrs. Grant's feelings, and trust nothing may occur to damp them. She is a most affectionate parent, and in all things has consulted her daughter's best interest. She had been most urgent in her entreaties that I should marry Fenton, and on the present occasion seemed rejoiced to meet us together. Her youngest daughter some time after said Captain Fenton and Mr. McNaughton were the only two gentlemen in Calcutta with whose appearance she was at all taken. I spent as much of the day as I could with her, and promised to visit them whenever it was in my power.

1st December.—There are now some vessels here on the point of sailing for the Isle of France: Fenton has gone on board some to ascertain their accommodations, but as yet we have not fixed on any, although finally resolved to depart by the first opportunity which is favourable. Half of our acquaintances still seem to think us insane, and the rest suspend their judgment.

There is a gentleman here, a lawyer, Charles Prinsep, who, hearing of Fenton's intentions, seems very anxious to get him to take charge of a property he has in Van Diemen's Land . . . he offers Fenton the half of the increase of cattle and produce if he will take charge of it, he supplying a certain sum for its improvement. He seems a very gentlemanlike and well-informed man, and though we had fixed on Port Macquarie as our place of location, the reasons he has given for his preference of Van Diemen's Land have made us vacillate; its

fine and temperate climate and rising importance as an agricultural country are strong recommendations. It is never visited by those parching droughts that often destroy the harvest and sheep-pasture in Australia. On the whole we are rather disposed to alter our first plan, and follow the example and opinion of Mr. Prinsep.

4th December.—As I sat this morning writing to James, the sudden appearance of my dear friend Blackwell made me for the moment forget everything, sad as it is to look on one you love for the last time, *knowing* it to be such, and certainly there is hardly a chance, be it ever so remote, of our meeting again, when he departs for the West Indies and *I* for New South Wales. He has been to me indeed as a dear and tender brother, ever since that sad hour, when I first felt the misery of being without one. . . . My dear Blackwell! In my regard for him were united all the elements of which friendship is made up. Friendship, community of sentiment! How much is conveyed by those words! Shall I ever meet again a friend after my own heart, yet endowed with all in which I am deficient? Never, I fear! There are so few I can even tolerate, I need hardly hope to find another I can so truly love and esteem.

Fenton has taken our passage to the Isle of France in the *Hamoud Shaw*, an Arab ship in the service of the Imaum of Muscat. It is a fine vessel of 800 tons; there are, I believe, no passengers but ourselves, and the captain seems anxious to afford us every accommodation; as it might be long before another of the same burden offers, I think it best to take advantage of this. I now begin to feel I am about to leave India, whether for our advantage or not, He only who decides all things can determine.

6th December.—The bustle and confusion of this house affords little time for thought. . . . I am in the midst of laborious packing, and here, where the natives seem bent on frustrating instead of furthering your progress, I at moments feel almost wild with the variety of things I must do and direct. Fenton is all the day occupied with Mr. Prinsep.

I returned to spend as much of the evening as I could with Mrs. Grant. Fenton was going to the Mess of the 59th, and drove me thither a little before the hour. At this season how delicious the evenings are, and never did I look on one more peculiarly rich in all the glow of tropic beauty than this. . . . I could not help saying ‘Beautiful India,’ although it had been the shoal where peace was wrecked.

8th December.—I have been too busy to go to the Course, and consoled myself with a walk on the top of the house. . . . I was watching among the distant line of carriages for Fenton’s, he had been all day absent; while thus waiting Blackwell said: ‘What different scenes we shall both be looking on next year; think you the remembrance of this will pass away, or shall we revert to it with pain or pleasure? For my own part I feel I shall long recollect it!’ We talked over Dinapore, our first acquaintance there, the dear friend we had both left at Patna, of much connected with the past interesting to us both, of the coming future, whereof we could each discern so little even of our *probable* fate; but we both resolved that whatever might befall either, our intercourse and interest in each other should not cease. He had taken his passage in the *Juliana* and only waited my departure to remove to the house of a relation at Garden Reach.

9th December.—An old friend of Fenton’s, a Captain Kirk-

wood, who commands the *Columbia*, brought him some letters from his family and dined with us. I was almost sorry I was engaged to a quadrille party at Mrs. Henderson's in Fairley Place; inconvenient as such an engagement was, it was of old standing, and there was no getting over it; besides I happened to feel unusually well that night and almost in high spirits, which did not diminish on arriving there. There was a very large party of young people, which is not often the case, for at most parties here the good people are all grave in deportment, and bent in sober earnest on proving their own superiority, whether it be in rank or dress or wealth.

All the girls who had come out in the *Juliana* had been invited to meet each other. Jemima Aitkin was one of the number, and we formed an alliance for the evening. They were so gay, so pretty and unaffected, I could not resist the influence of their spirits and thought of past gay evenings, which once lay like flowers on the stream of time, but with the years, of which they had formed an item, were long since engulfed by oblivion and sorrow. At supper I found myself, on the right, touching an old gentleman whom I had met at Bishop's College, and never since. He had then expressed a kind of interest for me, which to a suffering mind was gratifying, and after my marriage I frequently thought of renewing my acquaintance with him by inviting him. This I should certainly have done if I had known before that night that Fenton had been acquainted with his son, killed at Rangoon.

We expressed some regret that we had not met before, with several questions and inquiries as to where I had hid myself in the interim. I replied that I had been fully employed: first I had been nearly *dead*, next I was *married*, thirdly I was all ready to leave India and turn shepherdess in New South Wales. Of my marriage he said he was aware, and since he

could not be the man himself, expressed every good wish towards him who was, adding he believed from report my choice was a good one. Anent my pastoral scheme he had not so decided an opinion to express, but wished us every success. He said, 'Though you look thin and delicate, I rejoice from my heart to read a happier language in your eye than when I first saw you at church in the college chapel; you reminded me of Cowper's rose "just washed in a shower."'

PART II: ISLE OF FRANCE

I

DECEMBER 13TH, 1828—JANUARY 31ST, 1829

Sagur Roads, on board 'Hamoud Shaw.'

16th December.—It seems but a moment of time since I first sat here and gazed with such intense delight and excitement at that dark line of forest and jungle, those fishing-boats, the land birds, all which told me I had reached my destination. I can think of nothing expressive of the present change but the shifting scene of a panorama, leaving this moment not a vestige of the last. There is not a single circumstance of feeling which has not undergone a revolution so complete that I hardly comprehend myself to be the same creature, nor in point of fact *am I*. This change has come from the hand of God, nor can I attribute any part of it either to my own wisdom or my own folly; still not the less I feel that change has been, and cold indeed were my heart could I feel myself again on this well-remembered spot without being wrung by ten thousand recollections of all the love, the fond, assiduous care of my dear unfortunate Campbell. The very appearance of the ship, the arrangements of my cabin brought each a pang, telling of some little alteration he had planned for my comfort. The very conversations calculated to support my spirits and lead to pleasing anticipation seemed to echo in my ear as if

the wind brought them back to me. Even the gushing of the waves by the side of the ship had a tongue, and gladly I laid myself on my couch, not to sleep but be unobserved when evening came; for I had the double distress of deep and poignant sorrow and felt that sorrow to be *wrong*.

I have at all times felt peculiar depression of spirits at sea, and this malady is terribly aggravated by my present situation and the nervous irritation of my whole system. . . . The sort of people, too, with whom chance has assorted us are such as always make me dispirited. The misery of being the companion of vulgar people is one I never could become reconciled with.

I felt so ill last night, I find it necessary to remain quiet, nor will I look back on the shore I am leaving; it does me no good. I will endeavour to beguile my thoughts with writing, and give you some account of our departure from Fort William.

After drinking a hasty cup of coffee at gun-fire, we embarked under the glacis in a little beauliah of Mr. Prinsep's, just large enough for Fenton and myself at one side and the three children we had taken from the orphan school at the other, poor little helpless things! in the centre one set of my camp drawers to serve as a table, a basket with provisions for the day, as we expected to reach the *Hamoud Shaw* early in the evening. Our servants, who wished to accompany us on board, and all our baggage, were in a country boat in the rear. It was pleasant for a little, for there was none left to love and regret, and in the bustle of departure there was no time to *think*, until the splendour of an Eastern sunrise revealed the beautiful residences of Garden Reach. I *then* began to feel what till that moment I hardly dared to think certain, that I was leaving India. It was ominous! I had come up that

river first without Campbell, and though I left it united with another, deserving every feeling of affection which can again animate me, still my heart was bursting to remember that the loved and loving object of my early affection lay in a lonely grave in the land I was quitting for ever. It was a hard struggle to calm my feelings, nor soon accomplished, though I tried to fix my thoughts on the mercy of being permitted to leave India before my health was irrecoverably lost, as well as that of Fenton. The picturesque scenery of the banks diverted my thoughts. Again I looked on the walls of Bishop's College, where I had passed so many really miserable days; again I thought of that day when I came there alone to reside with those I had never seen; the bitter, bitter tears I shed in spite of every effort not to betray my feelings to strangers; the disappointment of my first glance at Mr. Mill's countenance; his solemn pedantry, then Mrs. Rose and her miseries; the poor Dane who sung his national melodies with so much feeling, and in broken English gave glimpses of the *Maladie du pays* which was devouring him, and seemed so little calculated for the missionary character he had assumed; his companion Mr. B., whose sentimentality amused me in spite of woe. Poor boy! just old enough to fancy it necessary to be in love, giving such piteous sighs which he wished me to suppose arose from the cruelty of some fair lady at home! A solitary Englishwoman among such a party was rather in a trying position. Then the good black-faced man, with whom I was glad to converse to escape from the personality of the schoolboy, until he too fancied sentiment more fit than science for a lady's ear, which perverse idea was the more provoking as he was so very well-informed—the solitary walks in my only place of refuge, the Garden.

In less than one year where were all these? The first and best, Bishop James, and his baby were dead, his widow returned to England. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Mill gone to England, her father, Mr. Elphinston, dead; dear little E. Gouldsbury dead; myself married and on my way to Van Diemen's Land. It was with a strange feeling that I sailed under the shadow of the well-remembered banyan-tree where I had so often hidden myself from the view of strangers, and said to the last view of Bishop's College receding, 'Adieu, you dreary pile, where sadness never dies.'

With these and such recollections my mind was engaged until all remembered objects were left behind. We expected to reach Kedgeree before sunset. Our little boat floated pleasantly on, only rather too rapidly for the attendance of the baggage-boat, which had fallen in the rear,—much to my annoyance, as it contained all our trunks, plate, money, and my ornaments. We produced our basket of cold fowls and tongue, of which the keen air disposed me to partake with unwonted appetite, and divided it with the children. Feeling very weary from the cramped position of the boat, where Fenton could not sit upright, we gladly removed to the top of the beauliah, where, in the glittering sunset, we tried to discern Kedgeree and the *Hamoud Shaw*. It was no small disappointment, on nearing the vessel which had long attracted our attention, to find it was the *Marchioness of Ely*, and that our ship had in the morning dropped down,—they supposed must be at Diamond Harbour.

We had now to determine whether to go on, or remain under the bank till morning, but as there was moonlight and the prospect of terminating our sail in a few hours, we resolved on proceeding. Our dandies resumed their oars, and after pulling for about an hour we got into a current which im-

pelled the boat with such velocity that I anticipated a speedy termination to our voyage. 'Tis true I felt some apprehension when a little after we were enveloped in a thick fog, which completely removed all hope of moonlight and knowledge of where we were. As our baggage-boat was still behind we had no means of adding to our comfort or resources for the evening. On passing a bazaar where I knew they possibly might stop, we put the sirdar bearer on shore to wait and bring on the others, suspecting they might adopt a practice very common in India when persons are on the point of departure;—their servants decamp with whatever they can put their hands on, knowing that they may easily evade pursuit until the unfortunate master is fairly out at sea.

I felt extremely exhausted, and Fenton tried to prepare a spot where I might lie down. I had a mattress, but there was no room to spread it, the children occupying one bench, and Fenton and myself the other. He collected the pillows, and rolling a blanket round us,—I know not how he disposed of his length of limb, but *he* soon slept. Gladly would I have done the same, which the gushing of the water alone rendered impossible. . . . We had no light to obtain even a knowledge of the hour, nor was there any seen afar to denote the vicinity of any ships.

I truly felt shivering with terror, yet would not waken Fenton, who slept even as profoundly as Shakespeare's 'Ship Boy,' while my very heart sunk within me. What a dreadful night I spent; I could not even turn round without Fenton first getting up.

Day comes to all, to the happy and the miserable, and it broke on me in a doleful plight, very, very sick, trembling with the raw sea air; what would I have given for the cup of coffee which so often in the caprice of indulgence I had rejected! The diminished resources of our provision-basket was no small

evil, for all it afforded was half a loaf and a small bottle of cherry brandy. This was a scanty breakfast for five persons; I seriously wished for the 'booby' or the 'noddy' on which Byron regales his famished mariners.

This morning was Sunday, which 'shone no Sabbath to us.' I often felt the sight leave mine eyes with fatigue and want of sleep and food. About one o'clock a fishing-boat came up with us, and they offered us some beautiful fish, which I could almost have eaten raw, and were cooked for us by the mongie in the best manner he could. True there was no 'Reading's' sauce, nor even salt or bread, but it was acceptable indeed. We were now close to Diamond Harbour where the *Hamoud Shaw* was *not*, and I was nearly in despair at the idea of another night at sea in the boat, when a sea-boat passing communicated that she was actually at Sagur Roads, which we reached before it was dark that night. I need not occupy my time telling why and wherefore she had led us this trip, nor all the Captain's solemn apologies; indeed, I was so thankful to reach the ship, I thought the less of it, although there was much to reconcile; the people who were to be our associates were far below the grade we would have chosen. Ben Hassan himself had much the advantage. He is really a fine looking man, and as he approached to make his salaam to me, I thought his appearance very striking, habited in a smart scarlet jacket, braided with black lace over a long white muslin robe or tunic; a fine cashmere scarf wreathed into a turban formed his head-dress.

After some ceremonious obeisance, he declared himself my *slave*, that all the crew were for my use, and, moreover, the good ship *Hamoud Shaw* at my sole direction; I could not help thinking what a blessed pilot or helmsman I would make in a gale. He has one European on board who holds the

office of chief mate. He makes me quite melancholy. He is English by name and complexion, but his tastes, manners, and his scruples, not to say religion, are Arab. He is the son of a Scotch clergyman, but for many years has been leading his present life, trading between Muscat and Mozambique. Muscat is, in his imagination, what Paris is to a Frenchman. His taste seems to lie in laying bare the unsightly movements of the human heart and crushing its better feelings, or dwelling on them with bitterness and ridicule. His converse turns on murders, executions, shipwrecks, his reading is the works of Voltaire and Paine, of which he has just read enough to unsettle his own belief. Poor fellow! though it always makes me nervous to hear him speak, I pity him too; he may not always have been what he now is; has he been made this hopeless thing by disappointment or alienation from the humanising relationships of life? Then what a life his must be; the captain is jealous of his European superiority, and exercises very many petty tyrannies on him. There is no being with whom he can exchange an idea. The Kranee, or priest, is under the captain's authority. The crew are a wretched mixture of low Bengalee, Arab, and negro slaves brought in childhood from the coast of Africa. Oh! would that you could but see a boy, with teeth like ivory, and face the very model for good humour, designated 'Cockroach,' who attends the captain with his coffee! Among this degenerate crowd there is,—*Oh! sad to write it,*—a Greek, a native of Athens, as happy, as degraded as the rest, a Moslem now by adopted faith and practice. Little reck he of past time; Marathon is no more to him than Mozambique—

'Earth, render back from out thy breast
A remnant of your Spartan dead;
Of the three hundred give but three
To make a new Thermopylae.'

He would rather have a curry than all the fame of his ancestors. I believe I was the first European lady they had seen, and they gazed with as much curiosity as you would to see an elephant grazing in the clover fields of Ireland.

Our accommodation is very good for a country ship, and, indeed, this amiable Arab has spared no pains to render it fitting. He sent on board a set of spoons and forks for my special convenience, and the latter article almost bewildered the intellect of the kitmutgars, who, never having seen a fork, could not comprehend its use or necessity. Ben Hassan was quietly stroking his whiskers in the assurance that everything was complete for my reception, when some one spoke of tablecloths, and tablecloths had never once entered into his calculations. However, he prevailed on a passenger on board to sell him a few, off which, I suspect, I shall but seldom dine. My bed, I expect, will be my resting-place for the voyage.

The captain does not appear at our meals; he dines with the Kranee in his own cabin, from whence the odour of many a savoury mess penetrates into mine, from which it is only separated by canvas. Over and above I am benefited by listening to the Koran, duly read by the Kranee, and favoured by the visits of two enormous Persian cats almost as large as sheep.

18th December.—The pilot has just taken back my adieu to India, a last letter to Blackwell. Every hour increases my dread of the voyage and my present suffering. . . . I feel that tightened sensation in my throat, that tears would relieve, but here I ought not, must not, yield to it. Though I said I would not look back on India, last night, when the necessity for air obliged me to go on deck, and the last sight of it lay like a faint streak in the horizon—I could not sit up, but lay on my

mattress, the crew were apart, and Fenton arranging for the safety of his white Arab steed between decks—I was alone, and felt it some relief to weep unrestrained over that last view.

27th December.—North Latitude 4.—I hardly know how to express the lingering flight of time since I last wrote. . . . Until these last few hours we have been enduring the misery of a calm, if you could but fancy what *that* is, under the Line ; it is totally beyond description. The fiery rays of a vertical sun pour down on you, everything is motionless but the ship, which turns from side to side, there being no power of directing her at the helm. It seems as if the element of water had expired, and that you float on a dead sea.

I lay on my mats spread on the floor, fearing some injury if I fell out of my couch. Of course there was nothing done by any one ; the crew lay asleep on deck, the Captain smoked his hookah and swallowed his coffee, and the Kranee read double portions of the Koran. Fenton's fortitude seemed also exhausted. He sat silent, pondering over the chart. I looked at him, and often deeply repented having urged him to this voyage. My bodily ills are hourly increased, and if I do not survive the voyage, his chief motive for exertion is gone, and he is a wanderer, without profession or object.

I do not believe any one ever suffered as I do, I am sick and faint from want of food, but if I begin to eat the quickening of the circulation makes me quite hysterical. This, of course, I must strive to suppress or conceal, for those who look on and cannot relieve me must also suffer, and as it is not usual, scarcely any one can understand it but myself. . . . I believe I repeat to myself all the poetry I ever read, to try and go to sleep ; sometimes I try to read by the lamp which hangs over

my couch, and a few nights ago I spent the most of the hours writing some lines on the miseries of the calm on the blank pages of an old magazine the mate had lent Fenton. If the pencilling does not rub off, he will wonder what they mean some future day. As they contain a pretty true picture of my state of mind, you shall have them too.

WRITTEN AT SEA, DURING A CALM, ON BOARD
THE *HAMOUD SHAW*.

‘Mute on the deck with listless hands
The lone and drowsy helmsman stands.
As if in mockery of his skill
No more the helm obeys his will.
The loose sail flapping on the ear
Makes dreariness appear more drear,
While Sleep a stern and dread repose
O'er all his wild associates throws,
Save when upon the midnight air
The Moslem pours his wonted prayer.
Towards Mecca's distant shrine he bows,
Assured that Allah hears his vows.

How strangely does my soul receive
Such sound, on Christmas' holy eve,
And muse on England's distant shore
Where thousands worship and adore.

Far from such scenc, my thoughts they roam
To hover round my distant home.

How fair was life when first mine eyes
Delighted in the first sunrise
That spread along the lessening shore
I part from—to return no more.
How strange that even from scenes of woe
It should be pain to feel we go
For ever—that we almost grieve
The scenes of perished hope to leave.’

What a relief to my mind it would be if I could often write. . . . Farewell for the present, my dear friend; should another day of grace be given I will not fail to use it.

*27th January (Port Louis).—On board the ‘Nerbudda.’—*When I laid down my pen last I judged rightly that I might not soon resume it; that day commenced a succession of what sailors term white squalls, which attended us to this harbour, but that I am here and alive is so great a mercy I ought not to complain. . . . Of course, as the weather became rough my suffering from sea-sickness was dreadful beyond description. . . . About sunset my mattress on deck was my constant resting-place. . . . I could not speak, and lay watching the daily change of position visible in the stars. I doubt if I can ever again look on the midnight heavens without uneasy recollection. The moment I descended Fenton would support me until my clothes were got off, and I was extended on my couch, then was my one chance of obtaining rest, for

‘Sorrow returned with the dawning of morn.’

I cannot forget the perplexity of the good captain one cool day when I was taken up earlier than usual. I was scarcely seated when I felt the sight leave my eyes and the power of articulation fail. Fenton and the captain were standing near, looking at some threatening clouds to windward. I grasped the former by the coat, endeavouring to express that I wanted to be laid down flat, and both being alarmed at the death-like hue on my face, some little bustle ensued, during which time Ibrahim seemed doubtful if it was proper for him to be there, and astonished at Fenton requiring his aid to arrange my position. Assisting fainting ladies was evidently so much out of his way, I never shall forget his face, and the pre-

cipitancy with which he descended for some superlative rose water. Sometimes as I lay, the Kranee would leave his position on deck (where he stood to watch the first dip of the sun's orb into the sea and commence his prayers for the ship and crew in preparation of the evening meal); he used to approach and try to converse in Arabic, Parsee, Hindoostanee—all in vain—and give it up in despair.

About this time some old feud between the captain and mate revived, to whom he would not speak on common or nautical points, as seamen generally do. His observations were made in silence, and this made me additionally miserable, as I took it into my wise head Ben Hassan did not know our longitude. I had heard him once say the event of the voyage solely depended on the fiat of Mahommed, already issued, and I was fully persuaded we were at the will of the elements unaided by human skill. The European officer only remarked that if our hour for shipwreck had arrived, we could not pass it by. . . . One dreadful night in the sudden fury of a white squall one of our sails—the main sheet, I believe—was carried away. Oh! what a scene was there—the darkness, the storm, the awful discord of Arab, Persian, and Hindoo jargon; before Fenton could stop me I was out on deck *au chemise*. I cannot tell for what purpose,—I flew out in a sudden impulse I was not conscious of. You may suppose how rejoiced I felt when we got sight of the Isle of Roderigo, which was a point from whence the exact distance to the Isle of France might be calculated. Here we changed our course, and dreadful indeed were the days that succeeded over a stormy cross sea. I had become so feeble I could no longer aid myself, and both day and night poor Fenton had to sit up holding me on that couch; every bone and joint seemed crushed with the blows he could not prevent me from receiving against the side of the

ship. Not alone did I suffer from bodily pain, but terror of the consequences to myself and infant if I should be taken prematurely ill in such a terrible situation; the only female on board was a child of thirteen.

When Fenton came into my cabin to tell me he saw land, I really cried from overwrought feeling, and very soon the motion of the vessel abated enough for him to assist me to stand and look upon the exquisite scenery of those rocky islands, which, lying in the channel, render the approach to the Isle of France so beautiful and so dangerous. We, however, had nothing to fear; it was daylight, and a light and steady breeze carried us safely on. I felt all the miseries of that voyage become light in retrospect when the blessed green earth was again before me.

I think it wonderful what power the mind possesses over the malady of sea-sickness. I dressed with as much alacrity as if I had been on shore; and by the time we anchored by a dangerous reef guarded by a bell buoy, was able to get on deck and feast my eyes with the scenery. The air, too, fresh and strong, felt delightfully bracing to wasted nerves like mine. . . . My impatience to get on shore was so strong, early next morning Fenton collected his letters of introduction and business and went off with Ben Hassan, recommending my doing as much in the way of preparation as I could without fatigue. I said I would, and accordingly summoned my little handmaid and emptied my drawers on the ground for her to arrange. First, however, the morning looked so charming, the lights on the mountain and shadows on the valley lay in such beautiful repose, I got a chair on deck. . . . I meant to sit a few minutes, and at least remained two hours. . . . I sat seemingly possessed by a spirit of procrastination.

About one o'clock, it might be, Ben Hassan returned almost foaming with passion. For some time I could not understand him; he told me I must go out of the ship instantly; this I assured him of my perfect readiness to do on Fenton's return, but he must recollect the quantity of baggage and furniture we had on board, which would require some time to take away; besides, there was no place ready for my reception. By degrees the fact unfolded itself, there was some old regulation that no foreign ship was permitted to land its cargo there or remain in the roads, and he was ordered to quit the harbour before sunset. Besides what private loss Ben Hassan might sustain, the insult to his master, the Imaum of Muscat, who had often afforded the English aid and protection, combined to rouse the ire of the Arab to exceeding violence; and seeing he had just cause, I could not say a word.

At this moment Fenton appeared, Ben Hassan having sent after him, and he was indeed distressed for me not a little; it was three o'clock, and the ship to sail at seven. Only fancy the state of my cabin, strewn with clothes, which then in good earnest we had to force back into my drawers just in the order they presented themselves. I groaned over the idea of when or how I should ever get them in order. Fenton was half crazy. He told me he would send me on board the *Nerbudda*, lying close to the beach, the captain of which he had been introduced to on shore, who most kindly offered me his round house and the assistance of a boat to get off some of our baggage. We had chairs, tables, couches, beds, china, in short, everything to remove,—where to we know not, as Fenton had been forced to return before he could do anything. Every moment of time was precious, particularly as a heavy storm had gathered on sea and land; the mountains which at

early day had looked so lovely were now hidden in mist. One of the boy officers of the *Nerbudda* had come with Fenton, and suggested it would be better to put me on board the nearest vessel, the one I was going to [the *Nerbudda*] being three miles off.

Of course, in the exigency of the moment I could have no choice. On Fenton's requesting me to go into the boat, as my being in *any place* out of the confusion would greatly relieve him, I did not and could not object. So he rolled a shawl round me and set me down with my new acquaintance, assuring me he would at latest join me in an hour; indeed, before I knew well where I was, the *Hamoud Shaw* was far behind. I then begged to know where I was going, and the young man told me 'to the brig *Agnes*,' being the nearest ship; that he would return and assist Fenton with his horse on shore and try to get some other boats to return with them, and, to save time, convey as much of our baggage to the *Agnes* as they could, from whence the transfer was easy.

On reaching the brig, however, the captain was dining on shore, none but inferior officers on board. This did not make much difference, it being only a vessel for merchandise. There were no luxuries, such as a chair for ladies to ascend. So I had to make my way up as best I could, which for me in the weak state I was (not to say unwieldy), was not accomplished with ease. As time pressed, the young man could only call the steward to receive me, and immediately returned to Fenton.

I had no uneasiness, as the *Hamoud Shaw* lay so near; I knew that the most of our things might soon be brought from her, and Fenton had said an hour, and he would come. That

hour, however, lengthened to two, and it became dark and gloomy in the cuddy where I lay, and I ascended to the deck, where I found quantities of our baggage had arrived. I took my seat on one of my own crimson satin cushions with a kind of groan at the idea of how little they would benefit in colour by the thick falling rain.

Still the *Hamoud Shaw* was visible, and all was bustle on board with boats plying to the shore. This accounted for Fenton's non-appearance. But now the wind rose into a kind of thunder squall, with dreadful gleams of lightning, and the rain poured down in torrents. No more boats were visible, and I began to feel restless and agitated at no sign of Fenton—being certain he would not willingly leave me in such a comfortless situation.

Between the squalls, light on board distant ships was visible, but boats were no longer to be heard (for now we could only *hear*), and my distress redoubled. I could no more sit down, but paced the deck in uncontrollable anxiety. The lights on board the Arab ship lessened and were no more. She had evidently gone out to sea. But where was Fenton? Nothing could be seen but what the flashes of lightning revealed, a sea covered with foam and mountain waves.

The sailors entreated me to get out of the rain and wind; as I stood there in a white dressing-gown, one of them wrapped the captain's watch coat round me, but I flung it off. I stood leaning over the side of the ship in extremity of distress. The rain beat in my face, and the tears blinded my eyes, for I doubted not that the boat in which Fenton left the ship had been engulfed in that boiling sea. He never would have left me to spend the night (for it was then past eleven) here alone. I said, 'He is lost, he is gone, and it is my work.' The sailors, poor fellows, gathered round me, with

every expression of pity. They hung up lanterns to guide the boat if yet she were to come. I felt despair, and consequently became calm, meditating on the new and strange calamity fallen on me; yet still I listened, and sometimes said, 'He will yet come,' but I did not believe it, and only felt the terror of my heart increased by trying to hope. Oh, how dreadful is such hope!

As I stood leaning my head on the side of the ship, I fancied a faint sound. At first it seemed no more than the throbbing of my own temples, but after a moment the striking of oars could be distinguished; we were all at the gangway, where I then could hear Fenton's voice, and flew to him half frantic with sudden revulsion of feeling. He had gone on shore with the horse, but was unable to induce any boat to return with him during the fury of the storm. I believe it was then that he met the captain of the *Agnes*, who was returning to his ship unconscious of the visitors who had taken possession of it. He was very attentive, and made every exertion to assist me. I was so much exhausted I could not be removed then; and after satisfying myself that Fenton was alive and well, I felt so famished by hunger, I really was glad to partake of the captain's supper, and thankful to take possession of his cot; and though the wind was at intervals tremendous, I slept! Early in the morning, when Fenton went on deck, he found the sailors all of opinion that very bad weather was approaching—it was in fact just the season to expect it—and he came down to assist me in rising, that we might get to the *Nerbudda*, the captain of the *Agnes* not being satisfied of the safety of the position he had taken up.

It was then I felt the effect of the last night's exposure; I could with extreme difficulty stand, until Fenton hurried

on my clothes. About half an hour's sail brought me alongside the *Nerbudda*, a very fine ship of nine hundred tons, fitted up in good style. The captain, Patrick, was awaiting my arrival, and received me with a degree of kindness I shall never forget. He was an elderly gentlemanlike person, and could hardly have expressed more commiseration if I had been his daughter. Never did I feel so thankful to Heaven for rest and safety. After collecting some of our baggage and obtaining the enjoyment of a bath, I sat down to breakfast, and did so relish some bread and butter and fish. Fenton has gone on shore, and I have written by him a letter to Robert Campbell, whose regiment, the 82nd, is, I understand on the other side of the island, and I now sit enjoying the delightful view in a clean English-looking apartment.

Oh, how true it is; there is nothing in the combined luxuries of the earth to equal the comfort of English arrangement; we are born in the midst of it, and know not its perfection until we are without it and feel the deprivation!

Fenton on his return last night seemed in no ways delighted with Port Louis. He says the houses are not much better than Indian stables. I shall have an opportunity of judging for myself, as he has promised I should dine at the house of Mr. Passmore, one of the partners in the chief house of agency there, a correspondent of Mr. Prinsep's.

He also called at Government House, and found his old commanding officer, Sir Charles Colville, was then at his country house about seven miles from town, where they spend the hot season. I have to look for some clothes to appear in, and I dare say to alter them too, so take my leave till to-morrow.

II

FEBRUARY 1ST—APRIL 2ND, 1829

2nd February.—‘To-morrow’ has expanded into three days, but I may take up my story from it. Captain Patrick offered to drive me to Mr. Passmore’s at dinner time, and leave Fenton the whole day uninterrupted. As we stepped into the boat Captain Patrick said, ‘My dear Mrs. Fenton, let me recommend you a bonnet. Although your hair and its arrangement is undeniably beautiful, *it* will be discomposed and *you* will take cold.’

‘A bonnet, my dear sir, where would I get a bonnet, unless *you* can lend me one? It is so long since that article has formed an item in my equipment for driving, I did not remember there was such a thing in the world.’

So finding the deficiency could not be remedied, off we went, and I felt the cool sea air blowing over me a luxury, while Captain Patrick was in distress for its consequences.

I could not help thinking Fenton’s observation just, as we drove through the narrow ill-disposed streets. The houses in general low, dark, dirty and inconvenient—a medley of French, English, and Indian taste and contrivance.

Mrs. Passmore’s mansion looked something like the little bungalows in the higher provinces in India, painted yellow, standing in a small compound, shaded with pretty trees.

The inside is covered with that gay French paper of figures and landscapes which in the days of my youth I thought so pretty in Guernsey; and I like it still, though here it is not considered fashionable, the most vulgar English pattern is preferred. Pictures always dispose me to reverie; I like a story on the walls.

The lady now entered her saloon, and received me with very much kindness, and interest in my difficulties, some of which she might well sympathise in, as she had two fine infants, the eldest just chattering in Creole French.

Her extraordinary resemblance to my sister's nurse, Eleanor, made me sit and gaze on her; while she looked at me as earnestly as politeness would permit, doubtless from thinking me a little distraught. So I took the first fair opportunity to mention that the haste in which I had been sent from the Arab ship prevented me from collecting the necessary wardrobe for travelling by land and sea; the only envelope I had at hand, a small Indian shawl, was lost in the hurry and distress of the scene.

The night proved wet and stormy, and they insisted on my taking a bed at their house, which Fenton joined in advising, though he would not himself remain. I well knew it was no time to trifle with myself, and really wished to have a little intercourse with some creature of my own sex. When she attended me to my apartment, my entreaty to have *all* the windows open astonished her. The system here is quite different from India, so that with the small low rooms I felt all but suffocated.

Early next morning Fenton came, and was called out of my room to speak to an old West Indian friend, a Doctor Coyer, on his way to England from Ceylon, who had been sent by Sir Charles Colville to beg we would immediately take up our

quarters in Government House, until he came in from the country, whither he hoped we would accompany him back. This invitation was given in the very spirit of kindness and hospitality. We had not a prospect of finding an abode, and it is impossible to fancy a more inconvenient place for a stranger, the servants all negro slaves, and the property of planters, who hire them at the most exorbitant rate, and frequently you cannot find them at all, from a late prohibition against the importation of slaves by the British Government.

After Dr. Coyler and Fenton had talked old times over, the doctor informed him he was then staying at Government House, but must leave it to visit some friends in a different part of the island. Before he went he wished to make me acquainted with a lady, also a guest there, a Mrs. Barnard, wife of a civilian in Ceylon, taking her children home to England. They were fellow-passengers, and expected to go to sea again in three weeks. He requested I would dine at Government House next day, when we should all meet.

Mrs. Passmore kindly expressed regret at my short visit, which she requested I would extend at some other time before I left the island. This I promised her.

10th February.—*Government House*.—You may perceive there is a break of ten days almost in my story. The day after we took our appointed quarters in Government House Sir Charles Colville and his staff came in. He is a most amiable and excellent person, and well merits the respect which all who know him consider his right.

As it had been settled, we returned with him to Redwit, his country house. The drive there was very beautiful. . . . The house is extensive but not lofty, the apartments commodious without the least pretension to be splendid. Like

most other houses the floors are of mahogany, most industriously polished with wax, consequently they shine like a mirror, and gave me no little terror and perplexity to keep my footing.

The shrubbery is particularly delightful. There is quite a wilderness of flowers, geraniums, myrtle, a whole tribe of lovely things I never saw before, and an equal number I was enraptured to meet again. . . . The view was one of the most enchanting I ever looked on, terminated by the bluest of blue seas, visible by the opening of two hills, skirted by sugar, coffee, and tobacco fields, and precipitous cliff fringed with cocoa, date, and palm, while in the ravines worn by the rapid and impetuous mountain rivers, the 'eternal' aloes threw up their spiral stems, clothed with pale straw-coloured blossoms. Oh, it was beautiful. Turn where you would, some exquisite landscape met your eyes.

. . . By that time a bell for dressing gave notice of the approach of dinner at eight o'clock. My motions were of necessity slow; I hate strange servants, and declined the attendance of Lady C.'s waiting woman, preferring Fenton's aid in forcing on a full dress gown (oh! what I suffered during his efforts to make me presentable), so of course the whole party had assembled before we joined them.

I shall only now speak of Lady C., whose air and appearance, habited in black velvet with beautiful pearls, was very elegant; tall, fair and slender, with fine blue eyes and light hair, she looked the thing she represented.

It is very rarely you feel comfortable in any place on the first day of introduction, but on the morrow, when we all got into domesticated habits, I hourly liked Sir C. and Lady Colville more. It was a house where, in fact, you might do as you liked without observation. Lady C. pursued her own

employments and her guests did the same all the morning. There were plenty of books, music, billiards, and newspapers, halls, verandahs, and walks, where you might be in company or alone, according to your taste.

Every Saturday there is a public day, when guests come from Port Louis and the out-stations. There is nothing wanting to render these parties agreeable! Outside the drawing-room windows is a verandah or balcony, filled with exquisite flowers and shrubs. To this retreat, when the rooms are filled with company, music and gaiety, I generally move by degrees, until I am unperceived and alone in its extent and vacuity.

Strange as it may seem to tell it, I often cry there till I am quite exhausted, so low-spirited and nervous do I feel—nothing is pleasure. My very heart sinks at the remembrance that I have another voyage to encounter. Oh! how shall I support it? Lady Colville, who sees how much I suffer, is so kind as to take no notice of anything I do, which relieves me from the restraint I might else be under. She knows the misery of being at sea in such a situation as mine. Her youngest baby was born six weeks after she landed. She says it is madness for me to attempt another voyage, unless I make up my mind to be confined at sea, and promises if I remain here to do everything in her power for me.

Mrs. Barnard came out to Redwit without her family, and seemed so restless and uneasy at the dreadful weather which suddenly came on, she resolved to face the storm and return. It was also high time for us to do the same, as Fenton had many arrangements to make; a brig called the *Mary* is to sail in a fortnight for Sydney.

12th February.—Government House.—We have been all day sitting to watch the approach of a hurricane; its advances are indeed magnificent, and you will find a minute detail in *Paul and Virginia*. As I lie on my bed I can see the dark line of storm approaching by sea, and the heavy clouds ready to burst over the mountains, which are black as night; indeed, you cannot fancy anything more depressing. The old negro, Ludivico, goes about from room to room, securing the windows; there is but one we can keep open for light; and truly they tell frightful tales of men, horses, and houses being carried up into the air. Even making the proper deductions for exaggeration, enough remains to assure me a hurricane is a fearful visitation; as it is, the house rocks like a cradle.

15th February.—Well, the hurricane is passed; but has left many a mark of destruction behind. The shore is strewn with wrecks; the harbour stripped of shipping; very many vessels driven out to sea, among the rest my favourite *Nerbudda*.

Community of fear made Mrs. Barnard and myself more intimate than I think we should ever have otherwise been. We sat in the saloon in the centre of the house fancying it more safe. I did not like her at first, yet had no good reason for it. There was some asperity of manner which kept me aloof; but after a little, I found that her good qualities much counterbalanced this defect, and at last I could not help admiring the spirit with which she made way against the many difficulties and irritations a stranger must meet here.

During my absence in the country there has been an addition to the party at Government House here, the widow of a Major Bates and her large family. I had heard his death spoken of on my arrival as a recent and melancholy event. Her rooms are in the centre building, which I must necessarily

pass to reach my own. I feel my foot unconsciously tread more softly as I come near.

17th February.—This morning Mrs. Barnard came into my dressing-room, saying that Mrs. Bates had expressed a strong wish to see me, partly from her expectation of hearing something of her brother, Major M'Mahon in the suite of the Governor, as I had seen him so recently. I immediately accepted Mrs. B.'s introduction to her friend, in whose appearance I was strongly interested. She was a pretty young creature, scarcely more than twenty-six, though the mother of nine children; dark enough enough to have been supposed Asiatic without any of the disfiguring symptoms of a half-caste.

Her large dark eyes, though dimmed with sorrow, looked like a wounded antelope. I could not look in them unmoved. Poor soul, she seemed so pleased to meet a person who had seen her brother, and this brought back so much of my own feelings and sufferings. She had left Ireland a child, and been married, when no more, in Ceylon.

I then went down,—to me a frightful task from the number of steps I had to toil up in return—to inspect some of our baggage placed in the godowns, and ascertain if there was any injury from sea-water: sat at length quite tired, to breathe on one of my trunks, and turned, on hearing steps, to see Robert Campbell and be clasped in his arms. My dear Robert! it was a sad meeting to both; even round us lay part of the very things he had assisted me to pack up at Chatham, and the veriest trifle awakened keen regret and remembrance.

And thus we met! He told me he came prepared to remain in Port Louis while I stayed, and long and interesting was

our conversation. As we sat beside a window Fenton entered the lower verandah in his regimentals (white jacket and cap); Robert remarked 'There was a stranger.' I felt my lips quiver when I said, 'Tis Captain Fenton,' and Robert's eyes filled for an instant as he looked and said, 'What a fine-looking man!' Their meeting was very cordial.

In the evening, as we sat together in the verandah enjoying the cool breeze off the sea just beneath us, Mrs. Bates and her sister approached, and we rose to meet them. She said her friend Mr. Vicars, hearing her speak of me and also of my name and family in Derry, seemed to wish to meet me, as he had a brother in Derry on the survey then going on in Ireland, belonging to the Engineers.

Then I recollected having met him at Prehen, where he seemed much smitten by Caroline Knox, and even that there was a strong resemblance between the brothers.

So after being introduced we became by this little circumstance as intimate as if we had met every day for ten years. He knew all my cousins by name and report. Mrs. Vicars was extremely pretty, dark, also with magnificent eyes and teeth. And he is what is concisely called a fine-looking man, without being handsome. One thing was certain, they had all predetermined to be delighted with me, and insinuated it in so many pretty ways I began to think the rest of the world and myself must be at fault, and that I was not the irritable, fanciful, capricious person I had ever regarded myself to be.

20th February. . . . As I sat writing to-day I saw Robert speaking to a very fine-looking woman who seemed also to be a visitor to Mrs. Bates. I asked him who she was, as her air seemed familiar; he said, 'Mrs. Longmore.' 'What, of the

Staff Corps?' On his replying in the affirmative I discovered that we had also met before. We travelled together from Leith to London in the *Enterprise* steamboat. It was impressed on me, too, by the remembrance of how much we had all suffered. I could occasionally have the aid of my beloved Campbell, but Captain Longmore was totally incapable of affording her any; greatly did she need it, for she was near being confined and her youngest baby would not quit her arms. The other two pretty little girls sat in my berth and amused me with their prattle.

On relating this circumstance to Robert he awaited her departure, and then told her of my being here and wishing to meet her. She appointed next morning to call. There was so much affectionate feeling in her manner, it was with real pleasure I renewed this acquaintance. She seemed quite shocked at my having to undertake a new and hazardous voyage without medical attendance, and said very much to dissuade me from the attempt, which only increased my despondency, for how can I remain without putting Fenton to serious inconvenience?

As I well knew employment is the best remedy for low spirits, I again set about my packing below stairs. . . . Fenton was absent all the morning, and I pursued my toil below until it was time to dress for dinner, so I won my way up to my room. As I passed the window, Fenton and a gentleman within were in conversation, and as Fenton said, 'Here is Mrs. Fenton,' I could not retreat, and felt a little conscious of my dress being disarranged, and one arm loaded with clothes. Altogether I stood gasping for breath until they both rose to relieve me of my burden, and get me a seat.

Fenton introduced Mr. Thompson, a gentlemanlike nice

young man, the other partner in Passmore's house. He came to apologise for Mrs. Thompson not having sooner called on me. She had been yet unable to leave her house: the medical people all recommended quiet, and not being exposed to the heat of the day; and she was still too English to adopt the French style of paying evening visits. However, he hoped next day she might venture out, and would come to Government House. His chief object in making the visit was to invite us to dine on the following day. He met Robert Campbell going out and included him in the invitation. He was hardly out of sight when a whole party of military people entered the room, whom Fenton had once known in Chatham. I really had not chairs for them, and the couch was spread with the evidence of the washerwoman's toil. Not knowing any, I did wish them anywhere but where they were.

Next morning I heard Mrs. Thompson's name announced, and seldom have I been so much interested in the first appearance of an entire stranger. Her beauty certainly is her least attraction, for she is blessed with those winning manners which impress you with being the overflow of an amiable and feeling heart. As I looked on her the idea of her being the model for English grace and loveliness was the effect of my scrutiny. I felt really pleased at the idea of spending the rest of the day with her.

While she sat I felt as if we had been old friends, and after she was gone recollected with mingled grief and pleasure her resemblance to poor, poor Charlotte Hart. There was the same large blue eye, light hair, and transparent complexion, even the figure bore a strong resemblance to hers, which was almost perfection. I need not further dwell on her appearance!

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23rd February.—Lady Colville, too, strongly advises me to give up the idea of the voyage, to let Fenton proceed by the *Mary* and prepare for my reception. She promises me every kindness and attention if this is my resolve. Fenton seems also to despair of my reaching Van Diemen's Land without some catastrophe; in short every one seems satisfied I ought not to go on.

Where there are so many persons kind and friendly, I am sure I should want for no attention. I have only to weigh the matter in my own mind, and if I can separate from Fenton at present. There is no question that if I go his anxiety and responsibility will be great. . . . The weather is becoming most oppressive, and if I must stay it would be selfish in the extreme to keep Fenton here, wasting alike time, money, and constitution. . . . The indecision of my mind increases my depression, for alas! I have but a choice of evils. However, I could not be justified knowingly to endanger the life of my poor infant. It seems I ought to stay behind and leave the rest to Heaven, who doubtless will not forsake me if I act according to my feeling of duty.

If this must indeed be my alternative I must struggle to keep up while Fenton stays. And if he must go, I wish him gone! I should certainly prefer being with Mrs. Thompson to any one in the colony, and have promised to pay her a long visit. But I have a prior engagement if I do remain.

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After the party went off to Redwit Mrs. Barnard insisted I would try to take a walk, it sounded like asking me to take a fly. . . . After some reluctance Mrs. B., with Robert and myself, set off, purposing to descend to the beach, but before I got half way I assured them I must stop or they must carry me on. The French parties, gaily equipped for their pro-

menade, surveyed us with curiosity, a point they never omit where English ladies are in question.

February 26th.—There has been again a large party from Government House here on a gay occasion, the marriage of one of Sir Charles' aide-de-camps to a French lady.

I forgot to mention among the visitors at Redwit Lady Barkley. She, too, was not a person to be easily overlooked. I fancy her like one of those fascinating women who graced the salons of Paris in the days of Madame de Staël or Madame de Genlis; handsome and talented, one seeming gifted with an instinctive knowledge of what was *best* to be said and *fittest* to be done, on every possible occasion, communicating her own ease to every one around her. Her husband, a confirmed invalid, never quitted home, and her only child, Captain Barkley, formed part of Sir C. Colville's suite.

A marriage is always to be commented on, whether for or against. She asked me at Redwit if I had heard it spoken of, and then freely expressed her sentiments. The lady was young and beautiful, but, I believe, unportioned, and not standing high in connections. Lady B. said, principally from their different religions she had opposed it as long as she could, even sent him to England for two years; then, finding him return bent on his purpose, she conceded the point and gave her consent, though her approval was wanting.

As she told me this, she sighed, and said: 'It is hard to have the cherished hopes of years defeated, but now I must only strive to aid them as effectually as I can.'

Captain Greville is what is termed a conchologist, a shell fancier. It is indeed difficult for any one with the use of their eyes to be less here. The shells are so exquisite, nothing could save me from the infection but want of time and money,

it being withal an expensive gratification. Some shells are so high as fifty dollars.

February 27th.—I don't believe there is any one in this large house but myself to-night; a very large party have attended Lady C. to the play, and I have walked about the vacant saloon musing over the future. This evening is like a picture of my own life—in a few more days Fenton will be gone, and to whom shall I then turn for support and society? I articulated this sentence leaning on the open window, looking on 'the everlasting Heavens bright with their starry host.'

They told me of Him who had created *them*, and yet did not scorn the weakness of human suffering; 'that when my father and mother forsake me, God will take me up,' and a strong assurance of protection upheld me.

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The band always concludes the morning parade by playing at the gate of Government House. But I must confess it is not now exhilarating, either to Fenton or myself. He seems sensibly depressed; God grant that new pursuits and scenes may reanimate him and present fresh interests! For myself, I can hardly express the heavy depression that preys upon me. My eyelids feel ready to overflow. . . .

It is a relief to me when Fenton goes to ride, or meets an acquaintance, of which there are many here. The effort of striving to be calm and tranquil renders the struggle with these feelings doubly severe.' When he is gone out I generally descend the private staircase, and throw myself on a couch in one of these dark, unoccupied apartments, where I know there is no one will expect to find or come to seek for me. People in this world are so apt to misconstrue one's actions. I do not like to betray what I feel to any one. I am more at ease

with Robert than any other person, from the prior knowledge he has of my feelings.

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As I sat with Mrs. Bates this morning there came in a Lieutenant S—— of the Engineers and his wife; it occurred to me he was the brother of Captain S. of the 13th, and in the course of the visit he made some inquiries that confirmed it. I thought, too, I had seen both before, but when or where could not determine.

After they went out Mrs. B. said to me, 'Perhaps you know Mrs. S——; she is a native of the County Derry, although we suspect there is something rather unpromising in her history.'

Then I recollected that while living at Bishop's College I had read in one of Catherine's letters that Mr. S——, who was then living in Dungiven, had married the daughter of old Mercer the carpenter, also that his companions refused to associate with them, as I believe that low birth was the *least* disadvantage attending the connection. I could not help laughing at the metamorphosis of the bare-footed Irish girl, the daughter of a village ale-house, into a fine lady. It struck me, too, that she departed with precipitancy when I was talking about some of my cousins. She certainly did remember me, as they lived at the avenue to our house, and well do I remember this girl running to the door as we passed in driving out.

The most amusing part of the story was that she had declared herself intimate with several families of whose name only she could know, the Knoxes of Prehen in particular, where I had first met *him*. It gave many persons here a strange impression of the manners and education of the higher castes in Ireland, as nothing could conquer the radical vulgarity and ignorance of this young woman. I much doubt if she

could read. She possessed a vulgar style of beauty, very bold, black eyes, fine teeth and complexion. But only fancy what an Augean task it must have been when she attempted the habits and manners of a lady to supersede her own.

I cannot understand the climate here; it is terribly hot, and yet there is a current of strong breeze perpetually blowing over the island. Were it not for this, the heat would be beyond endurance; one or two nights when the wind paused it was more oppressive than ever I knew it in India, and naturally so, the rooms being low, small, and close, the luxuries of punkahs, tatties, etc., being all unknown, and there is another want still more grievous to an Indian wanderer, that of bathing rooms; if I wish for this, which has become from habit an article of actual necessity, I must require the negresses to mount up these flights of stairs. Mrs. Barnard, who suffered equally from the deprivation, proposed to me one day after dinner, when we were half way down, to descend to the lower apartments and search for a bath. It seemed impossible that so large a house could have been erected without providing for this purpose. We certainly were shown a place choked up with weeds, old mats, bottles, in short, rubbish, and it had been once a bath, but neither of us were tempted by its exterior to give it a second visit.

I feel a great loss of Mrs. Barnard; she has this day sailed for England. I look across to the closed windows of her apartments with much regret. Mrs. Bates and her large family are preparing to follow, so that in a day or two more I shall be the sole occupant here. Arthur Frankland, indeed, has rooms on the first floor, but we only meet at breakfast. He dines at the mess and spends his evenings abroad. He is not,

to my taste, a very taking young man! But, on the other hand, he is very young, and his latent qualities may come forward by and by.

Lady Colville speaks highly of the talents of an elder brother in the Survey Department in Van Diemen's Land, who it seems was with them in India, and made there a marriage with more love than prudence. Such being the case, his uncle procured for him a situation in Van Diemen's Land from pure necessity. Mrs. F. she describes as being very gentle and unpretending—rather than pretty or animated—but she says she feels certain I must like her.

Lady C. is a right pleasant person herself and as gay as need be—indeed her spirits often quite bring me to a stand from the mere effect of contrast. There is a very agreeable and superior woman, their companion, or the instructress of the children; she has more the place of a relative in point of authority and respect—a Miss Begarry—who has much and deserved influence. I liked her particularly. She had much knowledge of the Highlands and many families in Argyleshire with whom I am connected.

Fenton accompanied the Thompsons to Redwit this morning. I told him I would send for Mrs. Passmore's carriage and spend the evening, but though I did intend it I was overcome with sickness. I lay down to recruit a little and rose no more. I attempted to stand once or twice to no purpose. It was very solitary indeed: after the servants took away my tea things, they locked the doors and went off, as all the negroes do at night.

There were many people who would have come to me if they had fancied me alone, but having said I was going to the Passmores no one suspected it—and in truth I was too ill to wish for society. When the band at nine o'clock stopped at the

gate and the bugle sounded the retreat, I wrapped my shawl over my discomposed garments and seated myself in the verandah.

It was an exquisite night. . . . The light on board many of the ships was discernible; particularly I distinguished the *Mary*, in which Fenton so soon proceeds. Night and solitude were then for me bad companions, for I had suffered much during the day from bodily illness. I said, 'I will *not* think.' I sat just outside my dressing-room window, the upper part of which was open, and the lamp on my table gave light enough to read. I took up a volume of Walter Scott's—the sweet and sad story of the *Bride of Lammermoor*. Though it was in truth a deep tragedy, yet the misery was not mine own, and it was better than thinking.

Next morning the negroes attending my rooms put a note into my hand from Mrs. Longmore, who, in driving by Government House from a party somewhere, saw a lady sitting in the verandah. So much for sitting *before* a lamp at night. She concluded there had been some mistake about my going to the Passmores, and wrote thus early to insist on my coming to her; being unwell she protested against as an excuse, as I might come in my dressing-gown and lie on the couch. Captain L., she added, would bring her carriage for me about two o'clock.

I really felt a great desire to go, solitary and ill as I was. Her being the mother of many children and capable of giving me a little good counsel was very requisite for me. So I lay down to keep quiet and nurse myself to be able to dress in time for Captain Longmore's promised call, but unfortunately my obstinate sickness was beyond all control. I more than once rose to begin my work and heavy toil of dressing, and got to—the nearest chair—it was all in vain. I bathed my forehead with lavender and eau de Cologne—there was no

healing in either. My head throbbed and my breath failed : in this way I actually passed the hours until I caught a glimpse of Captain L. in the portico, and was hardly inside my private room when his steps were in the outside one. The urgent necessity for haste gave me strength enough to convey an apology through the door, and assurance of being with him in five minutes—a promise I had little hope of being enabled to fulfil. *Where* I got energy to get on a suitable garment for dining in I hardly know, but I really was astonished at the respectability of my equipment in so short a time, and as the hurry of dressing is always productive of heightened colour, Mrs. L. was both surprised and concerned to hear me detail my sufferings. She talked of patience and hope. Thank God, I cannot now have much longer to endure. She also reminded me of what she had suffered on board the well-remembered steamboat. This led to much interesting conversation and cost us both some tears. She told me they had often wished to know what became of us.

I fancy the state of my feelings has a powerful influence on my health at present, for after I had been some little time with her, and soothed by her affectionate manner, I became quite another being, forgot my illness and spent a very pleasant evening. On returning, I had two adventures. One was, that the negress, after arranging my night lamp, fastened the under part of the windows inside and retreated into Sir Charles C.'s room, next *to* and entering *from* mine—which she also bolted inside.

On reaching the portico, Captain L.'s horses were a little restive, and he could not quiet them to attend me upstairs—indeed I insisted he would not attempt it, and pointing to the light in my room above said, 'You see all is ready, and I cannot require your further assistance.'

After considerable toil, I got into my verandah, and first attempted the usual entrance. It was fastened by a bolt at the bottom, and by no effort could I reach so far over it though I made many trials; each was secured in the same way, and the negroes, I knew, were all gone to their huts. The only assistance possible for me to summon was the soldier on sentry below, but the utter loneliness of the house made me hesitate, besides I did not see or hear him, and liked not the appearance of vociferating in the dark for him, as many might listen as well as the only one intended to hear: to descend and *return again* was almost impossible likewise.

I searched in vain for something to raise me up on to *lean* over, and at last sat down on the floor of the verandah, meditating how I should pass the night, as my dress was a thin Dacca muslin over a silk petticoat, a lace scarf being my only muffling. Most fortunately I found some masses of coral which Lady C. had placed there to dry, and when almost in despair collected them into a sufficient heap to enable me to climb over the door. But the difficulty with which *this* was accomplished left me faint and trembling. I recollected that Fenton had brought up a case of port wine, part of our sea stock, to be within my reach in case of necessity, and I got a glass of it ready, to refresh me after getting over the toil of undressing, when a faint sound near me caught my ear; then a light perceptible step at the door: I trembled like a leaf, knowing that no person was living in the house, Arthur Frankland having gone to Redwit. I saw the lock of the door move and then gently open, at which a darkly dressed figure was visible, but actually the sight left my eyes before I could recognise Miss Begarry, who it seems had come into town in the morning to visit a sick friend, in whose chamber

she had passed the day, and now came at a late hour to get a bed at Government House. She said, knowing that I was alone and perhaps asleep, she did not knock, but meant to peep in and pass through into Sir C.'s apartments if I should be. After recovering from my terror, I felt quite alive, and invited Miss B. to partake of my yet untouched refreshments, recounting my difficulties to secure an entrance. I besought her if the coral should be injured, she would kindly exculpate me from doing it needlessly.

She seemed highly entertained at the whole story.

4th March.— . . I believe I must take leave of you for some time. Fenton's departure is fixed for the 10th, and as he will take on all our heavy baggage I must again commence the task of arranging it, that is, separating what is only mine from his! It is a strange feeling with which we have adopted *this* measure, which though we admit the necessity of, we each refrain from talking about. My only solace is the society of Robert, with whom I have no restraint, and this comfort will soon be lost to me: he is appointed to the 49th, and must proceed to India by the very first opportunity.

12th March. Port Louis.—The evening gun just fired marks the termination of one of the most wretched days I have ever spent without any sudden or severe misfortune having arisen to characterise it. I know not why: I had persuaded myself I must see Fenton again, though I well knew it was in obedience to my own wishes, and to spare me the pain of another farewell that he forbore to come.

However, the calm had lasted so long, and was yet likely to continue, it was insupportable to remain looking at the ship in which he lay, almost a stone's throw from the shore, and

remember he was yet so near and still we were apart. How grateful I felt when Robert offered to go on board and tell him I wished to see him again! However, my wishes were here defeated. After listening, hoping and waiting in vain, Robert returned alone! informing me that he could only find on board the *Mary* the sailors; the captain was on shore and Fenton had gone to the *Nerbudla* which lay alongside, where Robert also sought and found him not. But all this only confirmed my opinion that there was no chance of their sailing and that he would find my note and come at daylight.

Long, long before the *first* beam, I was at the window. . . . Every minute I thought I heard the striking of oars and listened with that intense strain of the nerves which *all* who have ever listened in suspense and pain must well remember. . . . The rustle of the cardinal bird in the stiff leaves of a date tree close to the window more than once made me feel faint with suspense and expectation. . . . I fancied a faint breeze play on my forehead and then just tremble on the tamarind trees. It might increase and prevent Fenton leaving his ship. And while the idea was just occupying my heart, I saw the *Mary* with every sail set gliding out into the bay, *thus* terminating my expectations. My last impulse was to seize my glass, and with it, a moment after, I distinguished poor Fenton standing on the deck watching this bungalow. His attitude, his figure, his military dress were all plain and distinct, until tears and distance blinded me. I laid my head on the window to sustain me. The casualties which might prevent our ever meeting all uprose before me. I looked again for the *Mary* lessening in the distance, and my heart felt bursting. Just then, Mrs. — entered my room, to take me to breakfast. She asked me what I was looking at. I replied ‘the sea,’ and

took her arm with a fixed determination *not* to intrude my private feelings of wretchedness on others.

When I sat down to table I recollected that on leaving it last night my belief that I must see Fenton again, kept me up, and again my eyelids were strained to contain the gushing tears. But still I sat there apparently calm. I believe I should have eaten a hedgehog unconsciously if it had been offered to me.

Breakfast over, I returned to my room, and there—no longer under restraint—I sobbed myself into a state bordering on stupor, sick, sick, both in body and in mind. There was now nothing to look at or hope for.

The sea was blue and bright, curled with a freshening breeze and no more trace of the *Mury* than if the waters had closed over her. . . . In the caprice of grief I said Fenton ought not to have left me, forgetting he did so at my own desire. Then I thought of my approaching confinement and my heart softened with the idea of an object of passionate affection whose life was bound in mine, which was now my only perceptible link with human existence.

This remembrance brought to my mind the necessity for composure—the injury It might sustain from my violent agitation. I had arisen and was bathing my burning eyes in rosewater, when a knock at the door preceded the entrance of Robert.

‘They told me you were asleep, but I knew you better.’

At that moment *he* was perhaps the only person whose presence would not have been an intrusion; affectionate and doubly dear to me, *he* understood my feelings.

I shall now, dearest, say farewell. Oh that I could see you *this* moment, could lay my head on your kind breast; but

to write in this way of impossibilities is merely madness. Alas, no! I must lay my head on my lonely pillow in the abode of strangers.

25th March. . . . This is a wretched state to exist in, and it is indeed more wretched by the want of a proper servant, and of the prospect of a suitable nurse during my confinement. I have been disappointed of the one I hoped to get, and at this time every person of good character in the island is engaged in the different English families, and also in some French, as I find they consider it more *fashionable* to have an English nurse.

Besides, if it pleases God to spare my baby's life, I shall require one competent to take care of it at sea, where I am so helpless, and no remuneration here can insure success. Lady Colville's sweet Georgina is nursed by a negress, but I hope and pray to be enabled to do this myself—it is only an assistant I require in the care of it, and to attend me in the meantime.

This evening Mrs. — came into my room holding a very fine boy by the hand. 'Here,' she said, 'is a specimen of New South Wales. This little fellow is returning there with his mother by the next ship.'

He was the son of a Captain Rossie, who had formerly been on the staff of a relative of mine in this colony, and now is Police Magistrate at Sydney. He had married a beautiful young woman here, much younger than himself, but she was long ill and supposed to be dying of consumption. The physicians at Sydney, merely to soothe her, had recommended her native air.

This I learned from an Englishwoman who attended the boy, and in fact her air and manner was so good I almost

doubted her station in life until her own distant and respectful manner reminded me.

I was extremely pleased with her maternal love for the boy, whom, she told me, she had brought up with the spoon from his birth. I asked her many questions about Sydney, which she replied to with intelligence and propriety. . . . She offered to make inquiry among the French families she was intimate with, if a good negress could be found to undertake the latter office.

Robert came shortly after. . . . He was to sail in two days, and feeling our separation so near we spoke more openly on many points we had each avoided before, fearing to pain the other.

Though it was impossible to dwell upon subjects of painful interest without deep emotion, to talk unreservedly with one so intimate and so affectionate was a pleasure my heart had long been a stranger to. Besides, I could not think without concern of his going to be a sojourner in a climate hitherto so fatal to all his family.

I don't believe any progress of time can make me forget the present suffering. . . . I wake long before gunfire, and watch the approach of light: a little tea or coffee is my only refreshment. After the tedious process of bathing without any of the Indian conveniences for it, when my apartment is put in order, I get my writing-box on my couch, my book—if perchance I have one—and then lay me down again, 'To measure time by pain.'

In the sultry noonday all nature seems, like myself, weary or out of tune. . . . I have room for meditation even to madness, but I literally cannot think, my thoughts are also spellbound. 'Tis not so when the twilight returns and the

first gale comes off the sea. . . . The glorious stars seem thronging from the undiscovered wastes of space and Eternity! I truly rejoice in their return and companionship:—

‘They utter forth a glorious voice,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeat the story of their birth.’

’Tis true they have also for me other and less exalted language and associations. I think of poor Fenton on his solitary voyage gazing on them arising from the surrounding waste of water.

I remember the hours on board the *Hamoul Shaw*, when to watch their nightly progress and change of position was my only interval of interest. . . . The evening star seems almost a part of myself. Where have I not hailed its lamp?

How wonderful is the dominion of the imagination over our physical powers! I felt this so acutely a few nights since.

I always strive, if possible, to dine with the family or at least sit at table. I was thus sitting after dinner in almost a state of vacuity when the bugles of the 29th regiment sounded their usual call to dinner. It was the same air I had heard the bugles of the 13th play after returning from Campbell’s interment, since which time I have never listened to it; the sight actually left my eyes; I must have fainted if a hysterical burst of tears had not relieved me. The effect was so sudden to those in the room, who could not guess the cause, no more than I could explain it. I cannot describe the distress of the scene, which did not *terminate* then. I knew I might hear the same next day, and the very expectation of it, though the sound was too distant to distinguish it, produced similar con-

sequences. I feel as if I should never get the better of it, and yet, after this struggle of agitated feeling has spent itself, 'tis strange how much easier I feel, especially if alone, when I can get out, and the night breeze in truth brings 'Healing on its wings.'

Perhaps from all this you may form some idea of the extent of what I suffer, though no words I can use could express it altogether.

27th March.—As I lay this morning on my couch endeavouring feebly to knit a little pair of shoes for my baby I unfolded a paper the worsted had been wound on; it was a little note of dear Blackwell's, sent to me shortly after I left Dinapore, with some of my things left there. Though it was brief and hurried, there was so much heart expressed in those few hurried lines, so much zeal for my comfort, my feelings were quite overpowered. I thought, Oh! for such a friend at this trying moment. A negress knocked at my door with an envelope from Sir Charles Colville, containing a letter from Eliza D'Oyly and another from Blackwell. I can but feebly express the consolation I received. . . . I determined, if my child lived, to call it after her, as it should be her god-child.

As I sat writing Mrs. — came into my room, saying they were going to spend the evening in the country. She inquired where the woman was whom I had engaged to attend me as a sort of sick nurse—a miserable substitute for the sort of person necessary to me, ignorant and vulgar in the extreme. I had allowed her to go on some business for herself to the cantonment; indeed, I was better pleased to be without her all day. It was at night only that the necessity of having some one beside me made me endure her.

I was rather low in spirits when I felt I was in the

house alone, the negro servants having all departed to their cook-house, to make the most of their master's absence; so that, literally, there was not a soul within hearing.

Long, long after drum-beat I still listened and still expected my attendant, but in vain; she came not. I think it was the feeling of solitude and helplessness which brought on sympathetic bodily suffering, for I felt such severe pain I was truly terrified at the idea of being then taken ill. I walked about, lay down, rose up, tried every position in the hope of finding relief. I shed floods of tears, absolutely not knowing what to do, and struggling against frightful suffering. I sat down at the window, hoping to catch a sound of some one—any one—approaching. There was a light burning in the back apartments of Colonel ——'s bungalow, and I remembered there was an European woman there, the wife of his servant. What would I have given to see her then! I attempted to walk from my window across the compound; then the thought struck me I might encounter the Colonel, with whom I was very slightly acquainted. I turned with renewed despondency to lie down again, yet in my clothes. I recollect watching a bright star glimmering through the leaves of a date tree, and wild and wandering reveries passed over my mind; in the midst of them I slept! Merciful indeed was that brief oblivion. When I woke the first streaks of morning were glimmering over the mountain tops. I felt cold, almost benumbed. But the spasms of pain had subsided, and I rose to find a shawl to restore a little warmth. It was four o'clock, and there were many hours to wait before I could procure any refreshments, ten o'clock being the breakfast hour; and having no servant to send, I must necessarily wait for the first who approached my apartment.

About eight a tap at my window announced a visitor in the shape of the renegade, who very coolly accounted for her absenting herself by saying she met some friends, and they were making themselves merry, which induced her to do the same. I am certain I felt as much bitterness as ever Caligula did—for five minutes, as she seemed to feel real contrition when informed of the night of suffering I had spent.

III

APRIL 3RD—JUNE 27TH, 1829

18th April.—*Grande River, 4 miles from Port Louis.*—What a change in my feelings since I wrote last. Oh ! what a relief. Here I sit in a pretty quiet pavilion writing, while my beloved child sleeps by my side. My child ! What a flood of new emotions the very name produces. It appears as if I never *felt* or loved till now. I am very certain if I could describe the extent of what I feel, even you would doubt my being in my right mind ; unless you could take into consideration the desolation of my heart when it came to light it up with a pure and imperishable affection. Would you could see it at this moment ! for if I tell you how lovely it is, you must suppose it only exists in a doting mother's credulity. Before I *saw* it, I heard the whisper, 'What a beautiful infant,' and forgot I had given it life at the utmost peril of mine own, for truly it was all but lost.

It is indeed wonderful to myself, the renovation of my powers ; the long and oppressive misery I endured alike exhausted my mind and body, made the present intolerable and the future terrible. The very power of walking about is so new and delightful. 'Tis true I am weak, but what of this in comparison with the past, and very few women are able to do half as much as I have done. My baby is only yet a fortnight old, and I have been able to remove

from Port Louis and take up my abode with Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, according to our previous agreement. He has been so very unwell that they have removed out of town to this very sweet romantic place, where, according to the fashion of the island, a separate pavilion is appropriated for my use in the garden, or, as we call it in India, 'the compound.'

. . . I am enjoined by my charming young friend to consider this pavilion as home, where I may be visited or leave to visit, as suits my arrangements. This is so kind, for if I were compelled to attend to the ceremonies of society, I should be in despair! I breakfast here, and Mrs. T. also, in her room, as he goes off about eight to town, where he generally remains until four, then returns to drive out or walk about. My day, however, begins many hours earlier; in fact, I hardly sleep, not from illness but from a kind of mental excitement and watchfulness of the infant I cannot yet moderate. You will smile if I tell you I never fancy it *safe* unless in mine own arms. The nurse likes this persuasion full well, and allows me the full benefit of carrying it about for hours of the night. Then I am up by gun-fire for the purpose of its being taken out before sunrise, through a pretty shaded walk, where I can look at it while I bathe and dress. I have at this hour an early cup of coffee brought me, then proceed to the arduous task of dressing and bathing Flora, whose baptismal appellation I anticipate. Then about ten o'clock Mrs. T.'s gentle voice—

‘Comes like the fabled music that beguiles
The sailor on the waters.’

Or if she is ill, which is too frequently the case, her negress presents a little chit of kind inquiry for us. When she can

and *does* bring her work and come to me, her conversation affords me particular pleasure. She has equal simplicity and originality, with strong sense and tender feeling.

I generally join her at tiffin. . . . I sit until the hour for our evening walk and Mr. Thompson's return to drive out this sweet lady. As I cannot introduce my nursery into their phaeton, I prefer my stroll about the compound, where I can rest at will under the delightful shade of the cinnamon trees; if the night is fine, I sometimes return with Flora to the dinner-table of my friends; if otherwise, I have my dinner sent to my pavilion, where Mrs. T. comes to bid me good-night after her dinner. They seldom dine alone, and I relish strangers so little, it is one reason why I prefer being alone.

I can hardly describe what I feel: I am quite conscious that it is very extravagant, but not the less I *do* feel it. When I have compelled myself to quit the infant for this short period, I have been so faint with terror I could not swallow. It is quite a malady. . . . This would not be the case if I had a nurse I could place confidence in. My present one is a young French girl, whom I prefer, though without experience, because she is sober; but as I must direct her in every proceeding I cannot be a moment absent. I have, too, a negress to assist, who, as a negress, is very passable.

I spoke before of a Madame Rossie, whose child and nurse visited me. This woman was the greatest comfort and assistance. Her mistress heard of my distress for a nurse, and most kindly allowed her to come every second night to sit with me and bathe and dress the child. Fancy my horror the second day after it was born. The Hottentot creature who professed to attend me was dressing it in a manner which made my flesh creep, and cost me many a bitter tear to witness. Well, after it was dressed, she took it by the feet, and

shook it with its head down, as she affirmed, to keep its liver from growing. I screamed and flew out of bed to seize the child though so weak; a fainting fit succeeded. Next day I determined to wash it myself, and actually did sit up and accomplish what to me was one of the most painful tasks I had ever accomplished. It was the first infant I had ever dressed, and it is a thing of such nicety to do, the sight almost left my eyes with nervous agitation. I am satisfied many women have reared ten children without as much personal exertion as I am obliged to make.

Oh! had you but seen my situation when it was born; I had been all that morning rather better than for some days before, and by no means anticipated the event being so near. About six o'clock I began to feel anxious to see Dr. Shanks, and after a delay and suspense and search of about an hour it was discovered he had gone early in the day to visit the lady of an officer in the neighbourhood, who was precisely in my situation, and had not returned. You may guess the consternation of this intelligence, and how not a moment was to be lost. My nurse went off to the mess of the 29th to inquire if their Surgeon was to be found. After much delay she returned with the Assistant Surgeon of that corps—a very young man, an utter stranger whom I had never until that moment seen. After the progress of some dreadful hours, of which the less either written or remembered the better, I saw, evidently by his manner, he was alarmed for the result, and I had full time to feel I stood on the verge of eternity. Why can we not make the solemn impressions of such an hour influential over all the rest of our lives? Can I ever forget my feelings then—my thought of husband, father, sister, and all from whom I believed the shadow of death was hiding me for ever?

Dr. Robinson at last proposed sending in search of Dr. Hart, the Staff Surgeon, who might be in town. The very first look of Dr. Hart revived my confidence. . . . It is wonderful how much the *manner* of a medical man can influence a nervous patient. He was not young, and had a tone and bearing of kindness which in a younger man would have been out of place. I do not doubt, under all circumstances, that I owe my life to him. He took out his watch to mark the time of the baby's birth—four o'clock on the 3rd of April, the anniversary of my marriage.

He seemed to feel a most cordial interest in me, and paid me many a long visit whenever his leisure admitted of it, as a friend, so that I really began to look for his appearance with impatience; every evening, after dinner, he and Dr. Robinson turned their steps to my abode. The latter I soon began to like extremely as a gentlemanlike and well-informed young man. Both seemed equally to feel for my loneliness and lowness of spirits. . . .

Still their kindness could not supply the want of a good nurse at night, and really the distress I felt was inconceivable. Weak and exhausted as I was, often had I to contend against fatigue almost amounting to stupor, fearing to sleep, lest I should neglect my watch upon the infant, and that the ignorant woman would cram it with improper food; or, if I slept, that they would expose it to the mosquitoes. I can hardly convey to you by words the satisfaction I used to feel when Mrs. Hughes came in about eight at night, and then I cast my whole care on her; so careful, neat, and judicious, her manners so good, she was an unspeakable relief.

After spending a few nights there with me she told me her story. She was an Irishwoman, and at a very early age married a handsome sergeant in, I believe, the 49th. Her

own parents were dead: she lived then with an uncle, a rich farmer. Her marriage proved unfortunate. Her husband was dissipated and extravagant, her children successively died, and she became almost heartbroken. A lady on her way to India tempted her to accompany her there, and wet-nurse her child. This she agreed to, partly hoping that a temporary separation might bring her husband to some feeling of remorse. Well, to India she went; and the family she lived in became so attached to her, they would not part with her, and she accompanied them to England. . . . I fancy she then made another attempt to live with her husband, and, disgusted again, accepted a similar situation. This accounted for her superior air and manner. . . . She seemed so truly delighted at meeting with any one to speak of India.

I fancy Mrs. Rossie was confined at the Cape, or at sea, and being unable to nurse her child, induced Mrs. Hughes to take charge of him, and bring him up by hand, in which she succeeded admirably. Such were the circumstances by which she became my temporary attendant. Oh, how gladly would I have kept her with me, had this been possible. She much loved her mistress, and told me with many tears she felt certain her death was rapidly approaching, of which the sufferer was totally unconscious. In that case she must take the first opportunity to return with the child to his father, so that we should probably sail together. I should call it a blessing to have such a woman to superintend the nursing of my baby during the period of suffering and helplessness I must expect then.

10th May (my birthday).—"Tis three years to-day since I left Dinapore to reside at Patna. Oh, how many events have crowded into that brief moment of time: I almost doubt my own identity when I look at my lovely infant, and remember

the hand that has upheld me in all my trials. I must not repine, but rather say, 'Good is the Lord.' When will this day return, and bring testimony to my conscience that my heart is corrected and purified since its last departure; that I have loved God more and the things of this world less?

Mrs. Thompson came to beg I would try to dine in their house to-night—there was to be Mr. Denny, who wished to see me. Did I introduce Mr. Denny to you? I believe not, though he was one of my first acquaintances. Mr. D., then, is English Chaplain at Port Louis, and I found in about five minutes that he was an Irishman, and had spent some time in Derry, where he knew many of my connections. We accordingly became firm allies from that time, and often met; but since Fenton's departure I had not seen him. So as my pet seems disposed to be good, I shall transport her to the couch in Mrs. Thompson's drawing-room. . . . What a delightful view there is from one window. . . . The house is on the top of a hill, consequently considered to be delightfully situated; for catching the wind it certainly *is*, which is the only drawback to my enjoyment with them, as the current of air they rejoice in I tremble at for Flora's sake, and it would be too much to punish a whole party on the plea of her safety, when she ought to be in her own room.

At the bottom of the hill is a little village, on the bank of the river, which here forms some pretty cascades, beside which the negresses assemble to wash. It is exceedingly picturesque; the invariable costume is a handkerchief tied round the head in the fashion of the Scotch snood, red, yellow, or pink; the petticoat also of the most showy pattern and hue, and a white handkerchief pinned down over the bosom and shoulders, leaving the arms bare. There are some of the Creole French have beautiful hair, and fine eyes and features.

I have seen them extremely handsome with very soft voice 'like the warble of a bird.'

These women are often mistresses of many negresses, and obtain a support by taking in washing from the town; you see them out among their servants superintending the work; as in other tropical countries, they wash in the running stream, beating the clothes with wooden knives, and singing in a sort of measured cadence—very pretty it is to see and hear.

Then, as I sit, I amuse myself with the figures of the inhabitants from the interior, who are less familiar with English ways and habits. These pass by to and from the bazaar, which they supply with fruit, fish, eggs, etc. They trot along with large baskets of custard apple and plaintain, guava or shadoc on their heads, or fish, so exquisitely beautiful in their colours and shading, they look like paintings.

Their looks express reciprocal curiosity, as they pass, yet not without the salutation which French politeness has dispersed wherever they govern, and here the time of French ascendancy is still too recent to be forgotten. There exists among the higher classes a perpetual jealousy of the English.

It happens just now almost every Englishwoman here is more than commonly pretty,—some remarkably handsome—which induces the French inhabitants to believe that *all* are the same; an Englishwoman and a beauty seem one and the same thing.

19th May.—I did not feel disposed to dine in company to-day, as Flora was rather unwell. But Mr. Thompson said I must come, came over for me, and would not return without me. There was a large party, among others my friend Dr. Robinson, whom, by the way, I had never met out of bed before, and he expressed a degree of kindness almost affectionate at witnessing my perfect recovery.

I sat at dinner beside a very gentlemanlike young man, a Mr. Saunders, who I understood was married to a French lady, and heard some one congratulating him on the birth of a daughter. We spoke of India, and of some persons in Calcutta, where he had spent a year; then of Bangalore; when I inquired if he had any relations there, he said his brother was Judge and Magistrate of that settlement. I told him of Mrs. P. being my near relation, which he declared almost made *us* cousins, and so we agreed upon being cousins, and got into conversation about different members of his family. . . . I could not help laughing when he said, 'In the name of wonder how do you come to be here alone, and I, who am a connection and ought to know you best, only find about you accidentally?' I explained how and why I was thus apparently left on the rentroll of Providence, and he made me promise as soon as Mrs. Saunders was able to sit up, to pay them a visit, and command his assistance in any way it might be available at any time. These points adjusted to our mutual satisfaction, we parted with many expressions of goodwill.

3rd June.—What a miserable night I have experienced through the foolish timidity of my nurse. I told you my little pavilion was apart in the garden, and I generally left both the doors and windows unfastened; indeed, if security had been required, there ~~was~~ no means of obtaining it, as the only fastening was a small bolt, which even my strength at the outside could have removed. But I never think of being afraid, therefore imaginary terrors find no encouragement. I slept in one room, the outside one, and the nurse in the other; in the night I was startled by her at my bedside, declaring there was some one coming in through the window where she

slept. I started up and went in to see, but all was perfectly still; after looking from all the other windows, I opened the door and surveyed the outside, where nothing appeared to justify her assertion. However, as the trees grew thick round the back I could not be *certain* that it was groundless, therefore put on my dressing-gown and sat down to listen, during which time she told me so many horrible stories of murders committed by the Maroon slaves in the forests, near Meburg, that she communicated to me such a portion of her fear as made me feel a little chill and trembling. However, when I thought of our being so close to the Thompsons that the lamp in their lobby almost lit the path to the pavilion, and why should any depredator approach a person whose situation gave no promise of any seizure of importance, I became tolerably composed, and endeavoured to render her so, with little success. I sent her to bed: after a few minutes she was up again with the same alarm; though I did not feel apprehension, the renewed disturbance of my rest made me nervous and uncomfortable; I earnestly wished for morning. About three o'clock she began to perceive how idle her past terror had been, and went to bed,—she soon slept with that facility that the lower class do find sleep at their call, which truly counterbalances half the ills of fatigue. . . .

I felt so feverish, I gladly opened one of the side windows to let the pure air blow on my forehead. I sat by my bed watching the sublime effect of the first gleam of light spreading over those mighty peaked mountains. . . . I hardly know whether I slept or woke, when the first vermilion tinge of sunrise fell on my white gauze curtains.

I don't think watching the sunrise has been much in your way at any time, whereas from my wakeful constitution and nervous feeling which banish sleep, it is with me a familiar

sight. I cannot understand *why* it always should impress or rather oppress me with a strange sensation of solitude, a loneliness I could not strive against. The return of *light* ought to renew cheerfulness. Then why do I feel thus sad? Is it that the eyes are closed that once looked with equal delight on such a scene, the voice hushed that would have praised its loveliness, that seas and nations interpose between me and those who still live to love me, which weighs upon my spirit?

There are some verses of my own of an earlier date which I had not for many a day remembered that started into my reverie; I do not think you have ever been *delighted* or *benefited* by their perusal, so I will give them to you here, being exactly the frame of this morning meditation. Be it known to you, they were entitled the 'Voice of the Morning,' and written at the request of a friend who was departing for India, who was sufficiently in my confidence to be entrusted with my secret frailty of thinking in rhyme, a folly I don't think time likely to cure me of, though certainly my offences against reason and plain prose are waxing less frequent of late.

1.

Enwapt in her mantle of starry light,
 Ye may see the vanishing car of night;
 Now sinking far in the west away,
 To shun the eye of the rising day;
 The wreathed mists of the hill are curled,
 And the voice of the morning cheers the world.

2.

I waken the lark in her grassy bower;
 I open the cup of the lily flower;
 I drink from its chalice the pearly dew,
 I gather the breath of the violet blue;
 And the orient light of my garment throws
 Those beautiful hues on the opening rose.

3.

My early rays through the woodland gleam,
Or quivering fall on the glassy stream ;
From the ancient cedars, that stand sublime,
In Lebanon's Forest unscathed by time ;
To the waves of the Ganges widely spread,
Where the lotus shines o'er its crystal bed.

8.

And who are they, whom the morning breeze
Is wafting over the sleeping seas ?
—There are some who careless turn to roam,
Who call no spot of earth their home ;
Alike to them each scene, each face ;
They leave no friend's familiar face.

9.

But there's one who mournful comes to stand
And gaze on the fast receding land
Till his heart is sad, and his eyes are dim,
And the scenes of this world are lost to him ;
While he lists to the breakers with deafening roar
As they rush to the land he may view no more.

10.

More hopeless still, is *their* grief who dwell
In that desolate home he remembers well,
Who mournful view each well known scene
Where erst with Him their steps have been,
And start at every turn to find
Some fond memorial left behind.

11.

Oh ! many a youthful brow doth wear
The withering touch of untimely care,
Who start from the pictured dreams of sleep
On the colder forms of truth to weep,
On each fond hope the heart hath lost,
Too fondly kept ! too rudely crost.

12.

With some the hours of night have fled
By the couch of the dying and the dead,
Who fearful gaze on that breathless clay
When the light of the spirit hath passed away,
And shrink to feel They are gone for ever,
That the voice of the morning can waken them never.

13.

Alas ! unto sorrowful hearts I bring
No healing power on my dewy wing,
I can claim no influence to dry
The tears that dim affection's eye ;
For my softest light and my freshest bloom
Invest their souls with a darker gloom.

14.

The hours are fleeting, I must away,
And soon in the light of the busy day
The wounds of the spirit are closed awhile,
And the cheek is dressed in a borrowed smile ;
Till the hours return when the pageant's o'er,
When the strife of the world is felt no more,
When the shadowy pinions of night have spread
O'er the sorrowing heart and the aching head.

It is curious to turn back to a picture of one's own feelings, when ourselves and the whole world have changed since it was taken, to compare the past with the present, hope fulfilled with hope defeated ! But does not hope expire with the attainment of its object ?

These few and worthless lines, gave back, oh ! how many a perished hope. They were written under the excitement of strong and painful feeling. The 10th and 11th verses were expressive of what was actually passing in my mind. The 12th was an unconscious prophecy of what was yet to come, the 4th was imagined from the description of my departing friend of the Straits of Malacca ' Whose verdant hills,' etc.

What a change has come 'o'er the spirit of my dream'; I may add continuously, 'The creatures that surrounded me are gone,'

'He was himself not like to what he had been.'

What a feast of poetry, true, sad, and lofty poetry, is that *Dream*. . . . The description is so vivid of that Oriental scene, words almost have hues. . . .

Oh, it is an exquisite poem; in that, as well as in *Manfred*, there are some touches that ice my very blood and leave me

'Breathless as we grow when feeling most.'

Truly I feel in too dreamy a mood for this workaday world and common sense to tolerate, so lest I bend the bow of your patience too far, I must quit the land of faery and fancy for some sober and matter-of-fact employment. 'Tis a strange effect of a sleepless night to spend the morning in day dreams.

7th June.— . . . Mrs. T. amused me considerably by telling me she had a violent curiosity to see me at first from two circumstances—the first that both she and Mr. T. were impressed with an idea that ladies coming from India were too fine or too helpless to do anything for themselves, which idea had arisen from the manners of a couple who had been their guests, during a temporary residence in the Isle of France; from one or two observations she made I feel certain the lady must have been a *half-caste*. The peculiarities of that description of persons she evidently was not aware of—and I found my opinion correct. I then told her the anecdote of Colonel — of the 47th regiment justifying one of his junior officers who left his 'dark ladye' behind in India, when I called it deserting her. He asked me, What could he do in England with a limited income, and a wife who could not wash her own face?

She further assured me the helplessness of this poor thing became so vexatious, it required all their sense of what was due to a guest to enable them to endure her—a poor superficial being at best, who required a retinue for her own attendance, which retinue made no minor portion of my sweet Sophia's annoyance.

It was very shortly after her departure that Mr. Thompson met me for the first time in the act of toiling upstairs from the lower story with a huge burden of clothes I had been unpacking, which he verily believed Mrs. ——— would have given up the ghost at the very mention of.

On his return home he said, 'Sophia, you complain of never meeting people you can like; I am certain that to-day I have at last found one to please you in Mrs. Fenton.' Then she said in another quarter she received such a strange description of my landing, without a bonnet and divers other particulars of the same stamp, she concluded I must be a very out-of-the-way person or somewhat distraught. To decide which, she asked Mr. Denny on his return from Redwit, where I was then staying, what order of person Mrs. Fenton was. But his reply was not very intelligible—describing me as so extremely *piano* that he could form no opinion. Only fancy me '*piano*'—and you may next call me a Chameleon; so much for definitions.

14th June.—I have been so much engaged with what Dominie Sampson calls the unprofitable arts of hemming, sewing, and shaping in preparation of Flora's outfit on our voyage, I have literally worked from morning till night; with all I get but little done—for my work is so often put aside to attend on the young lady. I have a restless feeling which, whenever I have anything to do, prompts its speedy conclusion; I am never at ease, if I know there is anything hanging

over me to perform. I like to finish my work and then enjoy being idle, which I never can do if I think to-morrow is burdened with part of the business of to-day.

In the present instance I really cannot account for my own impulse for preparation, and Sophia laughs at me for being so prematurely wise and provident, and asks me *where* I am going and when? I tell her, My familiar spirit has told me to be ready, but I know no more, and in case nothing better offers, I shall just put Flora in a basket, and set off on a pedestrian tour through the island with my friend Dr. Barry.

By the way, I have not told you yet of Dr. Barry bringing charges against Dr. Hart and Dr. Robinson for attending me. They had, it seems, been long at war. He is the superintending surgeon, and was watching for some opportunity of attacking them. . . . So he tried to make it appear that they were engaged in private practice to the detriment of their hospital patients. So, these charges being given in to the Governor, a Court of Inquiry was ordered to investigate them, and there was my poor nurse, frightened out of her natural life, on being sent for to prove that Dr. Robinson *had left* the hospital and was undressed and reading in his room when she ran in to beg his immediate attendance on me: that Dr. Hart had gone to bed, and neither had ever seen me until that night. They proved that their prolonged attendance was a matter of strict necessity . . . that on their leaving me at five o'clock they went straight to the hospital, etc., etc., making it apparent that the charge was instigated by malice, not public zeal. Sir Charles Colville set the matter at rest by a general order fully acquitting them, also declaring that Mrs. Fenton, being the wife of an old and meritorious officer, had a right to the attendance of the regimental surgeon—especially in the absence of her husband; in being with her they were in the

performance of duty, especially where that of the hospital had *not* been interfered with. There was, too, some notice of removal to Dr. Barry, the particulars of which I forget, but under *these* circumstances, being each on the wing, a tour of the island together seemed both agreeable and natural.

There is certainly something extraordinary about this same Dr. Barry. I remember one night in India, I was sitting in the room of a friend assisting to watch her, along with a nurse-tender much in esteem in Calcutta, who to pass the hours began to recount some 'passages' in her former life. She said she had been driven from the Cape by Dr. Barry, over whom there hung some extraordinary mystery. She was in high repute there, and often engaged where Dr. Barry attended. One night when she supposed a lady she was with to be in want of immediate aid, she sent for him—he slept in the house—but not being so expeditious as she wished, she ran herself and made an uncereemonious entrance into his room. Thereon he flew into a most violent passion. She declares, and steadily maintains, that the nominal Dr. Barry *was and is a woman*. From this time he displayed the most implacable dislike to her, even to making it a condition not to attend in any family where she was employed. The truth of this strange tale I cannot pledge myself to uphold, but well I remember listening to it one tedious night, when I very little expected to come in contact with the individual concerned.

18th June.—I now certainly believe in presentiments. I have had an unaccountable impression that I was going to sea, and been daily preparing as if such actually were the case, whereas no ship was known of to sail, or even expected to go to Van Diemen's Land.

There is a pretty little apartment off Mrs. Thompson's saloon which delightfully commands the sea. I walked up and down there with Flora in my arms, lulling her to sleep, while Sophia lay on her couch. We each pursued our separate employment—hers was the fashioning of a cap, mine was singing to the child and talking to her by turns. I stopped at the window. There was one white sail on the calm sea, but so far off, so imperceptible, it required deliberation to say if it were indeed a sail, or only the snowy speck of a tropic bird basking on that bluest sea. At last I decided it was a ship, and coming in. I said, 'Why is it, my dear Sophia, that the sight of a ship approaching should make me melancholy? For me there is naught either to hope or fear, none I love, either to render me happy by coming or sad by departing.' She said, 'This feeling naturally arises from your anxiety to meet Captain Fenton, the loneliness of being divided, and your solicitude for him and your baby. I must tell you, you seem, to me at least, almost heroic in bearing up as you have done against the many trials of a young woman and a mother in utter solitude. I have frequently expressed to William my admiration of your fortitude, especially as I know your feelings to be extremely acute.' I told her what I believe is the fact, that my whole soul was absorbed by my passionate love for Flora, and anxiety for her safety. I had no being but in her, no room to remember self—indeed was scarcely conscious of anything but that one sentiment.

I had gone to my pavilion, and, as was my fashion, had laid my head by Flora's pillow to rest—not sleep—for in the day I never slept, though all nature seemed torpid in the sultry noonday. Mrs. Thompson's favourite negress came to my couch with a chit from town sent in haste by her master, to tell me of the arrival of the *Denmark Hill* on her way to

Van Diemen's Land *direct*: that she would only remain ten days: he also informed me two gentlemen had arrived from India, who were anxious to take a passage in her. One of these, an officer in the Company's service, was the son of Mr. Burnett, Colonial Secretary in Van Diemen's Land; the other, a Mr. Betts of the Nizam's service. One of these gentlemen had letters for me from India.

You may believe this intelligence soon put my dreams to flight, and gave me enough to think of, and no room for deliberation. My first impulse was joy, that now I might hope to join Fenton and find some settled home where I might watch my baby in tranquillity, and obtain the *rest*, both in person and in spirit, I had long been a stranger to.

But then arose the thought, What if my health should fail on the voyage—then, how is Flora to exist? If I suffer, so must she. Where shall I find a nurse? and so forth. Suddenly all these mists cleared off my spirit when I thought of the Omnipotent hand that had already upheld me in so many times of peril,—and was it shortened now?

But as there was necessity for instant exertion, I wrote to Mrs. Hughes, to inquire if she intended going by this opportunity, and if she could assist in obtaining a nurse for Flora on the voyage.

Since I had removed to Grande River, her suffering mistress had terminated her brief and trying probation, and she had been indeed faithful to the end.

Mr. Thompson as usual came to the pavilion on his return to inquire for us. . . . Finding that I was quite resolved to go by the *Denmark Hill*, he told me to command his assistance in any shape it might be required and any time, if I must go; as there were others equally desirous of obtaining

a passage, it would be expedient to make immediate arrangements with the captain for accommodation; he feared the best on board must be greatly inferior to anything I had before experienced. But my purpose being once definitely fixed, an obstacle of this kind would not swerve me. He had heard too that the captain of the barque was a low person and rough in the extreme; besides that he had a wife on board who commanded the commander: he almost wished to advise me to wait for some other opportunity, though none was in prospect, for though he could enter into my feeling of anxiety to be at the end of my journeying, still he feared Captain F. and his *lady* might be 'too many' for me. We ended our discussion with my leaving the issue at his disposal after visiting the ship and seeing Mrs. Hughes. Her assistance on board for the child would compensate to me for almost any personal inconvenience I might be put to.

How very fortunate it now appeared to me that I have been progressively advancing with all my preparations, how much hurry (and hurry is so ungraceful) it saves me now. I hope I may always be able to adhere to my favourite maxim, 'Defer not until the morrow,' thereby I may *govern* circumstances, not let *them govern me*. It now gave me many hours of intercourse with my dear Sophia that must otherwise have been denied me—no common pleasure, though sensibly diminished by her depressed spirits and general debility.

When Mr. Thompson returned to town he met Mr. Saunders, and on communicating my intention to sail by the *Denmark Hill*, the latter immediately sent to remind me of my engagement to come into Port Louis, and make my final preparations for sea at his house . . . recommending me to fix the next evening for him to come for me, as time was precious. On consulting Sophia, she said if I thought it expedient, which

doubtless it was, to adopt Mr. Saunders' proposal, she would also remove into town, as she affectionately said Grande River would be full of my remembrance to her, and she thought it would save Mr. T. some anxiety about her to be nearer medical advice. So I sent a reply to Mr. Saunders that I should be ready.

At my next interview with Mr. Thompson I found all was arranged as I desired. He went on board with Mr. Burnett and Betts, and engaged what they all considered the best cabin for my use. Mrs. Hughes had also engaged a cabin for herself and the child, and she seemed much pleased at the prospect of our being fellow-passengers. So all seemed *couleur de rose*.

I wrote a few lines to Lady Colville to acquaint her with my intentions, and was so actively employed that I was 'all ready' when Mr. Saunders made his appearance. I did not feel regret at this separation from Sophia, as she would be so soon beside me in Port Louis; but I *did* as we wheeled swiftly by the pretty retired spot which had been to me 'as a nest to a spent bird.'

My negress had been sent on to await our arrival, and Flora was so judicious as to sleep until the phaeton stopped in George's Street—fashionable, I must inform you, from its English appellation. On entering the hall, I found to my disappointment Mrs. Saunders had a *soirée*, though she came immediately to receive me at the door, but seeing a roomful of company within I hesitated to make my appearance, as no nurse had arrived to assist me. However, Mrs. Saunders very soon settled the point by carrying Flora to the apartment designed for us.

With the aid of a negress I soon had Flora bathed and undressed, and when she was disposed of, prevailed on Mrs. Saunders to return to the saloon, and I would rest after my drive; so after ordering me coffee she left me, and in the

luxury of quiet and my dressing-gown I made another survey of my apartment. . . . It was of no ordinary elegance, and tasteful arrangement, and yet so much of the savage is innate with me, that I felt sad after my hermitage at Grande River, the dark, shadowy trees that anticipated the evening's approach, the gushing river lashing the narrow channel that opposed its mountain impetuosity, the blue jagged mountains that rose abrupt before our windows, rosy with the early sun, or entwreathed in the floating vapour. . . . In this frame of mind how the sound of that piano below jars upon my ear. *Nimporte*; I suppose young ladies and pianos are part and parcel of each other, poor things—though perhaps they are all pitying me just now. I wonder, if Flora lives to be a 'young lady,' how I am to get on with her. This is a serious thought, and lest it should disturb my repose I will think no more of it *now*; for perhaps she may have been *born old* like myself. So good-night.

19th June.—Next morning being Sunday, I made a great effort to dress and dispose of Flora in time to enable me to dress myself suitably to meet the family at breakfast. 'Farewell to the halcyon days of dressing-gowns'; a sad adieu I repeated to myself while pinning and hooking a fashionable dress made by Madame Laplace in gay Calcutta. Having expanded very considerably since it was made, I felt as if this meritorious concession on my part to established form did surely deserve some recompense beyond that of dress, like virtue, being its own reward.

I was somewhat surprised to find Mrs. Saunders prepared to go to church, as she appeared by daylight even more delicate than I had pronounced her to be by the glare of the lamps. However, she *went*. Her mother, her grandmother, her four very pretty sisters all assembled to go too. Interesting as the

young ladies indisputably were, a specimen of an old French lady was a real curiosity. This old lady, so much more youthful in dress, gait, and manner than myself—it was strange, passing strange, to call her ‘Grandmama,’ as strange to me as it evidently was to her that I should risk spoiling my *shape* by nursing my child.

Verily, as the party proceeded to their open carriages, as I looked down from my room upon the procession, they appeared a moving parterre—feathers, flowers, silk, and gauze, while the circumscribed limit of their waists gave me a pain in my side from very sympathy.

Dr. Hart came to visit me, and brought a note from Lady Colville requesting me to contrive to visit her at Redwit before I sailed, but this I found to be totally impossible, as every day and hour was crowded with employment; besides many arrangements to make for Flora, there was my *own attire* for months neglected to be reformed, knowing that I must no longer expect to shelter myself by my nursing avocations from looking a little *like other people*.

Would these packings up were all at an end! it is a serious thing to set out on such a voyage without a medical man and an infant of four months old depending on my strength for nourishment. But, as there seems no alternative between this evil on one side, and that of, protracted delay on the other, I feel I *ought* to go, and trust, as past experience teaches me I may confidently do, to the Eye that neither slumbers or sleeps. And oh! undeserving as I am, may that special mercy be extended to my beloved and innocent child, and bring us both to that haven where we would be.

Monday morning.—I am ready and breakfast is not, so I

open my sibylline leaves to say that poor Mrs. Saunders is very unwell. She caught cold at church and is very feverish.

June 23rd.—I have at length ascertained that we sail on the 27th, and am just returned from visiting my accommodation on board. It is dreadful, but must not be thought of *now*,—indeed, I *never* before even saw such, this being my first introduction to a vessel without a poop. Yet for this gloomy den I must pay as much as we did for our beautiful cabin on board the *Hamoud Shaw*. There is as much difference for the worse between the Mahomedan and the Englishman. *N'importe*. I have one stern cabin, Messrs. Burnett and Betts the other; Mrs. Hughes the side cabin next mine; some pariah the opposite one, and two or three others disposed of 'the gods know where.'

I left Mrs. Hughes in charge of Flora; so, as the morning was enchanting, I had time to enjoy our sail into the bay, conveyed in Mr. Saunders' pretty boat. It was so exhilarating, I almost regretted so soon to reach the *Denmark Hill*, my prison in prospect. The old captain received us; he was short, square, dingy of hue, with an awful squint. But the best part of the entertainment was yet to come, in the introduction of his lady wife. She was tall, *passée*, but by way of being dashing withal, and seeing Mr. Saunders to be a handsome young man, was, I suppose, calculating on him as an agreeable passenger, so showed off after her fashion in high spirits, assisted no doubt by the conscious dignity and captivation of an enormous lilac gauze toque—she hung out signals of distress in the shape of a cabinet piano, guitar, etc., affirming she could not exist without her *comforts*.

Oh, that you could see, or I justly convey to you an idea of the pair; very loving too, and novel from my long separation

from anything resembling the English vulgar. However, being informed that Mrs. F. was the first authority on board, Mr. Saunders, like a wise general, began his operations to gain the lady by many compliments on her taste, etc. etc., which took good root. He impressed on her that the Colvilles were much interested in my welfare, and that I had many influential friends in the Island whose good opinion would be secured by attention to my comfort.

After his oration, her complaisance seemed unbounded, and he took advantage of it to point out all the arrangements he wished to have made, directing where such baggage as I had then ready to put on board, should be placed.

Well, we behaved extremely well, and took a ceremonious leave of this exemplary couple. I do not say that we did not, when fairly off, indemnify ourselves for our restraint by one long and lasting laugh—almost till we landed.

I found a messenger at George's Street with a very kind letter from Lady Colville, saying that as I could not go to *her*, she would come to me, and intended to be at Government House early next day. . . . Even my maternal vanity was more than satisfied by her admiration of Flora. She repeatedly called her the loveliest baby she ever saw, with an earnestness that confirmed her sincerity—indeed she is not the kind of person to talk only for a fashion of speech.

There were several strangers, among the number Captain Lyons commanding the *Jasper*, a very pleasing person, and most polite in offering any assistance of his sailors or boats, besides his nautical experience in preparing my cabin. I told him I had felt some uneasiness at a report of the *Denmark Hill* being in an unsound state, not seaworthy, as sailors term it. This point he promised me should be immediately put at rest,

and that he would call at George's Street to report to me the next day. Dr. Hart was also present, and declared himself my especial knight errant.

I then sat for two hours with Lady Colville; she had put up some of Georgianna's warm clothing, in case my own stock should run short, and most kindly offered me many comforts, which had formed part of her own supplies from England for the voyage. I need not tell you that with real regret and some tears I parted from this very kind and interesting lady. . . .

On my return to George's Street, before I had seated myself, the Thompsons' carriage drove up. Running downstairs I met them at the door, but instead of speaking they held up their hands, with other demonstrations of surprise, to see me *fashionably dressed*.—'You surely sin against yourself,' said he. After a little conversation with them, other visitors presented themselves, Mr. Burnett and Betts; the former, tall and gentlemanly in deportment, seemed rather silent, but Mr. Betts, who in the course of the conversation contrived to let me know he was married, has a great deal to say on all subjects, and says it well. To each of the party Van Diemen's Land was *terra incognita*, and we all compared our opinions and anticipations. . . .

While dressing for dinner I heard our already large family party had been increased by a Captain and Mrs. —, two children, and negresses and bandboxes *ad libitum*. Captain — seemed a staid, quiet man, not very young; his lady, about five-and-twenty *or so*, was like ten thousand fair ladies, the boast of happy England,—neat, quiet, fair—what else I know not, but 'fashionably dressed' will fill up the space.

One thing amused me, that there were five babies upstairs under three years old, and at each cry, each mama turned pale

and declared it must be hers, and then all simultaneously rushed out to see whose number was deficient; sweet Louisa Saunders, a privileged pet at the dinner table, whose long, fair ringlets, according to the French fashion, had never felt the scissors, looked like an old lady among the other babies in arms.

24th June.— . . . It was with much satisfaction I found from Captain Lyons that I might go on board the *Denmark Hill* without any apprehension. We sat a long time, and during his visit several others arrived, among them Mr. Denny. But one anecdote I must make room for. At dinner, at which he was a guest, there was some conversation about Mrs. Telfourd, who, Lady C. once before said, inked her fingers to seem literary! The stranger, Mrs. —, bestowed rather a sweeping condemnation on all the 'blue' ladies, adding, She hated to meet them, they were all intolerably stupid. 'What!' said Mr. Denny, 'do you really say so?' 'Yes,' rejoined the lady. 'All so disagreeable? What, not even except Mrs. Fenton?' I so sincerely supposed he meant a jest—though one of unpardonably bad taste—that I laughed very heartily, and told him I wished the cause had been left in other hands, not exactly knowing why I was to be champion for the Muses. I noticed while we spoke that Mr. Saunders whispered Mrs. —, who turned from red to blue and averted her eyes from me. After we left the dining-room she disappeared, and was still absent when Mr. Saunders inquired where she was, adding, He concluded she was afraid of being in the room with me. I hardly knew which, to laugh or be angry, when he said he had asked her after Mr. Denny's oration, 'if she had not been informed Mrs. Fenton was an authoress!'

Oh, how I wanted Sophia then to laugh with me, for I do

suppose some one who has seen me scribbling away at this 'Letter' has pronounced me 'preparing for the press!' Well, some people get the reputation of learning on very easy terms.

26th June.—All ready now, according to the seaman's phrase. How vacant my room looks. . . . I saw my dear Sophia for the last time, but Mr. Thompson said he must attend me to the ship to-morrow.

And now a few lines to him, my best, my dearest, my other self, James. It is ever my first pleasure on arriving, and it is my last care at departing, to tell him my heart is with *him*, as *his* follows me. Oh! how the thought upholds me now, that his benefit may be decided by the voyage I now undertake, that we may there unite in another home,

'Around the evening fire our chairs to draw
And tell of all we felt and all we saw!'

Surely if earth has peace and pure happiness, it will be then and there. . . . I am disappointed at embarking without a letter from him, but this will not hinder me from sending him my farewell. Shall I parody Byron's tribute to 'Tom Moore,' thus:—

'Now my ship is on the sea
And my boat is by the rocks,
But once more before I go
Here's farewell to thee, James Knox.'

IV

JUNE 28TH—AUGUST 10TH, 1829

On Board the Denmark Hill. . . . I have just descended from the deck where I watched the 'lessening' boat. They are all gone, and here I sit without one whose care I have any right to ask.

What a large party attended my embarkation! A. Frankland, Captain Lyons, Mr. Saunders, Thompson, Dr. Hart—but 'tis vain repeating names. How very kind were they all, and I shall meet them no more.

Beautiful Isle of France, farewell! How ever lovely is the receding shore, eternal in its beauty, imperishable in its poetic interest, girded in by that bluest sea, now so calm and mirror-like. How different was its aspect when I watched its billows during the hurricane, when fear had assembled us in the saloon in Government House. It sleeps *now*, as calm as on that morning when I saw Fenton standing on the deck of the *Mary*—perhaps just where I am now. May I look upon that tempest and this placid sea as encouraging and emblematic of the progress of events with myself? Are my trials past? May I innocently thus expound the future? For even with the discomfort of the wretched ship, how comparatively strong and happy do I feel, and if there is something to risk, so will

there be more to look in thankfulness to Heaven for when the voyage is over.

Our course lying directly scuth, a few days will bring us into very cold weather, and, I hear, a tremendous sea. . . . All the good people around me are bustling, fighting, and contriving . . . but all having been so admirably arranged by my many kind friends, I have nothing to do but look on.

I intend to favour the cuddy with my presence at dinner to-day, to *show* myself, and then *disappear* until we are in sight of land. To live among these people, even if I were well, would be a trial of forbearance that I need not uselessly encounter. I have had a case to decide between my nurse and the helmsman, something strange in its way. She prefaced her tale thus :—

'Mistress, I have a bet with one of the sailors regarding your name, for he will insist your right name is Campbell, as he went to India with you, and perfectly recollects your face and appearance. He said, too, he wonders much to see you in a "dirty little" ship like this alone, for when he was last at sea with you, the whole of the gentlemen on board, officers and sailors, were striving who would best attend to you.'

I said, 'I fear, nurse, you will lose your bet, but if you call the man forward to speak to me, I will settle your wager.' When my *ci-devant* acquaintance appeared, I well remembered him. He had lost one eye by lightning off the Cape.

Poor fellow, when he reminded me of the days when my large chair used to be placed beside the helm during the trade winds, and asked for all his old friends, I tried to answer him generally, and with cheerfulness as far as I could command it, but I felt that tightening sensation at my throat—a sign my composure would not last long. He saw, I

expect, that there was something out of place, and after begging to be sent for if I wanted any assistance, made his sailor's bow and departed.

.
And now farewell. The awful sounds of dinner are in my ears. One peep at Flora when I go to my cabin to put up my 'book,' and Othello's occupation is no more.

PART III: TASMANIA

I

AUGUST 11TH—SEPTEMBER 11TH, 1829

11th August.—On the River Derwent, in sight of Mount Wellington and Hobarton.—Though there is but one thought absorbing my mind, I must not anticipate, but tell you that after seven weeks of most awful weather we got sight of land. You may judge my thankfulness, as three weeks we had been under water on deck, nor had the daylight entered my cabin. 'Tis vain now to waste time dwelling on all the suffering of such a period with a baby at my breast, but I may express how much valuable aid I had from my humble friend Mrs. Hughes, and kind attention from Mr. Betts, who nightly stopped to speak and cheer me, sometimes, if it was tempestuous, nursing Flora or assisting to bathe her and beguile our mutual discomfort.

After reaching the point where the pilot is taken in, we had not long to wait. A fine ship was just then in sight which he had that morning left, and after some beating about, he came up with us, at sunset.

Mr. Betts hastened with the glad tidings, and I requested him to inquire if the *Mary* had been heard of, forgetting she had gone to Sydney.

He did not soon return, and when he appeared, although he assured me that the *Mary* had been long since announced at Sydney, his manner was constrained, and unlike its usual tenor. I had an uneasy or unsatisfied feeling, arising from his hesitation, so I again despatched him on a mission to the pilot to inquire if Fenton was known to him, either by name or in person. His second report brought a full assurance that he knew Fenton well, had lately seen him, that he was well and liked the Colony. *What* then was the *something* he had to say, but would not? That night when Mrs. Hughes was composing Flora for sleep and assisting me, she said, 'Do you think baby will see her papa to-morrow night?' I replied, 'Of course, if he is near Hobarton; but it is possible he may be in the interior, in which case Lady Colville desired me to send for Mr. Frankland, to whom she had written to be ready to assist me.' 'Yes,' she rejoined, 'or he might be in Sydney, or perhaps have taken an excursion to Swan River.' I started up in my bed, pulled back the curtain that I might see her. 'Tell me,' I said, 'at once, what you have to say! What has befallen Captain Fenton? I insist on being told!'—The poor woman was startled by my vehemence and said, 'Indeed, indeed, he is well. *But, but*, madam, he has left the Colony!'—Only fancy my consternation. Was she sure of this?—Where was he gone?—Who told her?—She believed to the Isle of France, *via* Swan River, a voyage that must occupy some months. . . .

The story was all my own now, and I sent for the pilot to see what further insight he could give me into the matter. The nautical news-carrier soon appeared and gave me very clear and positive information, as Fenton had told him he was going for his wife, whom he had left at the Isle of France in delicate health. I believe he told me many things he expected

me to be interested in, but I could comprehend *only this one*: that I had taken this miserable voyage in vain, and was *alone* in Van Diemen's Land, while Fenton was retracing the perilous sea I had just crossed.

Surely I am doomed in everything, and for me there is no haven of peace on this side of time. After this disclosure I was glad to say 'Goodnight' to all, and when alone how bitterly I wept over my poor Flora, until I wearied myself and slept. The sun arose in such splendour, I soon dressed that I might see it shine again on the blessed green earth,—and how lovely this is of all external objects—the aspect I should say, but in truth I know not what I write, and yet I must write or weep, and I give the preference to the former, for my tears you can never see; but you may one day participate in what were my present feelings.

As we sail up this beautiful Derwent, every mile most distinctly marks the progress of civilisation. We *now* are in sight of Hobarton, a small and irregularly built town, viewing it at this distance, but with an indefinable 'English air.' Mount Wellington, yonder table mountain, rising abruptly over the town, is topped with snow; the last snowy hills I saw were the Himalaya mountains.

There seems no lack of wood here, the hills—and the whole country appears a succession of hills, and gentle undulations—are clothed to the very summit, the foliage at this distance is very sombre. Not tropical—there are no graceful bamboos or feathery cocas. Still, from the uniformity of the colouring, not altogether English.

As we advance, pretty cottage residences are visible in what appeared impervious jungle. I wonder if these are 'farm houses.' There are streaks of lovely yellow sand, fringing each diminutive bay or inlet of the waters among the hills; there

are wide fields freshly ploughed, and ploughmen and sowers all busy at their labour with English smock-frocks. All this, so novel to me, will seem childish in the recital to you. But here, I candidly acknowledge, I have been writing to please or rather lull my excited feelings, more than to interest or amuse you; to keep myself from thinking what I am to do, when we arrive at the town we are rapidly approaching, for here I can form no plan.

How fortunate it appears, how providential, that the Colvilles should have written to Frankland to assist me in case of Fenton's absence. My purpose is this: I will send by the port officer my letter to Mr. F. and write to know if he can give me any information as to Fenton's movements.

As it is time this letter should be ready, I shall shut my book, and write it. Oh, how strange all this seems! How will it terminate?

14th August.—*Macquarie Hotel, Hobarton*.—'Tis night, all still, and I have just enveloped myself in my dressing-gown, and drawn my table closer to a wood fire. Only fancy, a wood fire! The first I have seen for so many years. I am impatient to go on with my story. Well, my letter to Mr. Frankland was hardly written, before the port officer was introduced to me by Mr. Betts, as Lieutenant Hill, a very mild and gentlemanly person. On the first mention of my name, he expressed the kindest interest, and begged an immediate introduction, as he said he was intimate with Fenton, whose movements he was fully aware of, also his intentions in leaving the Colony. He went to bring me! as he could not persuade himself that I had nerve enough to follow alone. Alas! had he known me better, how much might have been spared us both.

I then told Mr. Hill I had just been engaged in enclosing letters for Mr. Frankland, and writing to ask his advice. This he said was the very best thing I could have done, as Fenton and the Franklands were always together. . . .

A consultation was held between the gentlemen, as to the possibility of a whale-boat overtaking the *Orelia*, in which Fenton sailed, as the pilot affirmed that the fresh breeze, which brought us in during the night, must have retarded them; it was impossible they could round a certain cape, and might be still beating about 'Storm Bay.' So the result was that Mr. Hill, after leaving my letters with Mr. Frankland, would proceed to Colonel Arthur, to request assistance on my behalf. . . . How very greatly it lightened my disquiet, to find so much ready kindness displayed where I had expected *none*. But on the possibility of Fenton's return I would not suffer my mind to dwell. It was too vague.

By eleven next day we saw a boatful of gentlemen push off from the beach, and in a few minutes after Mr. Frankland's name was announced. I had sent Mrs. Hughes to put up our things within, and had seated myself near the window with Flora asleep on my knee. One glance at Mr. Frankland assured me he was above the common style of men, and a few minutes' conversation convinced me he was equally high-bred and kindly obliging. He had a gaiety of voice and manner more French than English, but still there was that which bespoke the high-caste English gentleman, and we became as well acquainted in half an hour, as if we had lived together for ten years.

He presented a letter left with him, by Fenton, in the event of my coming during his absence. This I only glanced over, and gathered enough for my guidance—that Fenton had advised me to consult with Frankland. After many questions

about his uncle's family, and his brother Arthur, a little nursing and much admiration of Flora, and every kind intention that could be expressed in words, he rose to depart, previously arranging that I should be ready by twelve next day, to go on shore to his house. He much regretted they had no spare apartment, but that should not prevent our being together all the day, and he would engage commodious rooms for me at the Macquarie Hotel, near his house.

I then reopened Fenton's letter to give it a more leisurely perusal. It ran thus:—

‘MY DEAREST BESSIE,—I write this prior to my departure for the Isle of France, in case you should arrive before my return, although I feel so certain of finding you still there, and that you will receive this letter in my presence from our kind friend's hand. But in the event of my calculation being wrong, it is necessary to provide for the worst, and secure due attention to your comfort. This letter will be delivered to you by Frankland, who will take for you a house, and by whose advice I strongly advise your being guided. In money matters apply to —, who is my agent, and has been very attentive. He will, I know, invite you, but mark! you must not go to remain in his house, for as a merchant he is not visited by the first class, and you would lose caste; but be courteous to them. I shall only add, do not deny yourself any comfort your affectionate husband can afford. I must be brief, my dearly beloved wife, that these hurried lines may not be too late to go on shore, and have not one moment to express those feelings which are my sole happiness, and without which, I have so often told you, life would be wretchedness, and it is my intense anxiety about you that urges me on to this voyage which you know how much I detest, but to look on you again, to be near, to protect you and our beloved little one, overcomes every

other feeling—in the anticipation of the moment that gives you both to me again. I have written to Catherine and acquainted her with our proceedings. Should any accident befall me, I enclose for your information a statement of my affairs, leaving you sole possessor of my property, to use your discretion for the future benefit of our child. A Will, to the same effect, is in the keeping of Frankland, on whose friendship you may depend.'

Such was the substance of poor Fenton's letter, and you can well understand how sorrowfully I perused it, for though all the unpleasant ideas of being solitary and unprotected were relieved, still I felt how many terrible chances might interpose between us for an indefinite time. My heart was very sad indeed.

.

Next morning Mrs. Hughes made such active preparations that I was quite ready, and even properly dressed, before Mr. Frankland's arrival. A number of persons were with him; they walked the deck, while he came in to know if he could assist me in getting off.

When I got outside, a general introduction, to I know not how many, occupied some time, for all these good people were intimate with Fenton, and came on board with the kind purpose of offering assistance. However, as Mr. F. had proclaimed himself my champion, there was no need of further assistance, and we all took our departure together, Mr. F. carrying Flora; in a few minutes we were on the wharf, as it is termed here—I first called it the 'ghaut,' to F.'s great amusement.

Then we took our way up Macquarie Street. About half-way up I could not resist the temptation of stopping to lean upon a fence almost breathless, this being the longest walk I had taken for some years; and further being equipped in black

satin shoes, they were penetrated by wet and fringed with mud. Mrs. Frankland's recollections of the habits of India soon explained my distress, and the party kindly accommodated themselves to my feebleness and unequal strength, until we reached the hotel, when, after inspecting the rooms ordered, Mr. Frankland, with equal kindness and tact, proposed they should all leave me to rest for an hour, when he would return and take me to his house, which proposal I readily agreed to.

Well, suppose the hour past. I am again on my way, attended by the nurse and Flora, and enter a very pretty cottage within a little compound of shrubs and flowers, in all the lavish fragrance of Australian spring. The cottage itself, as well as its inmates, the very beau ideal of taste and good order. Small indeed was the cheerful drawing-room, but how much did it contain bearing evidence of the high tone of its occupiers' education and tastes! . . .

Mrs. Frankland was then dressed for dinner. Lady Colville had told me I should think her cold, but not so. She was exceedingly kind, though calm and still in manner, which her aspect of fragility and paleness led you to attribute to physical causes. Her lady-like, quiet demeanour prepossessed me, and there was in her a most living resemblance of some one I had known before, though who I could not tell—or where.

While I was making my toilet in her room, I felt so exhausted by the length and weight of my hair, I expressed my desire to cut it off; she declared her *horror* at such a sacrifice, saying for many years she had seen nothing like it, and that there was some peculiarity in this climate very injurious to its growth. It does appear strange that all my illness has nothing reduced the quantity of mine.

With much pleasant conversation the evening passed, for

. . . to find listeners to all I had to relate of the most estimable family I had quitted was an enjoyment.

I could fill some pages with trifling matters, which all created interest, but it would not be worth your attention; one remark only—I was almost childishly pleased by the evening aspect of an English drawing-room, the windows covered with graceful blue merino drapery, the ‘carpet,’ even the polished steel fender and fire-irons brought back so many dormant remembrances.

On my return to the Macquarie Hotel, . . . I felt so nervous, to sleep was impossible, and I stepped out on a little balcony to look on the waters with which my future destinies and that of my babe were mixed up, and on the strange stars above me. It thrilled on my remembrance when I saw Orion exactly reversed from its position, when my mother used to point it out as we sat on the step of the hall-door ‘at home.’ Oh, what strange and wild transitions have passed over me since then, and *what* may be yet to come! I almost envied the visionary creed that can seek evidence of future fate in their aspect. But *this*, reason and religion alike forbade. The atmosphere here is surprisingly clear and rarefied, the planets shine like moons; I almost think they cast a shadow.

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I have in the midst of other disjointed thoughts to-night half inclined to the idea of returning to India, if Fenton’s return is hopeless. I must in this case have seven solitary months to spend here, how I know not. The *Georgianna* is about to sail for Madras with the 48th Regiment. If I take my passage in her I might spend a few months with George, and a chance exists of seeing James. However, this is but reverie, idle reverie. I must wait as best I can until the matter of Fenton’s absence is past a doubt. I now conclude

this mingled recital of the first twenty-four hours on a strange land! To-morrow night I shall talk with you again.

The day passed as yesterday, unless it were that an additional kindness of feeling and confidence grew with our knowledge. . . . I returned home early, as there seemed very rough weather approaching, and the good people of Hobarton are still primitive enough to exist without carriages or sedan chairs or doolies or tonjins, but I did sigh for my palkee when I faced the briny breeze; on turning round from the compound to proceed down Macquarie Street, the gusts fairly blew me round Mr. Frankland. This is the third day since the departure of the whale-boat, one or two more must decide my measures.

Next morning the rain poured in torrents, notwithstanding which I had a visit from Mr. Frankland. . . . I found the benefit of his arrangement with the persons who kept the hotel, which is also a kind of table d'hôte, that I should be attended in my private apartment whenever I should require it; as F. hinted I might not like to form acquaintances at the general table, although he said there were some nice people, but these in a mixed company could not be chosen out. A very pretty elegant little creature, Mrs. Boyd, with her husband, Captain Boyd, of the Staff Corps, appointed Assistant Surveyor General here, paid me a visit. She also seemed to think I had done wisely to avoid the public table. She expected to remove into a house they had taken when its owner, Mr. Dumaresque, went off to an interior settlement called New Norfolk, as Police Magistrate. I also saw a very dashing person, a Mrs. Roper, quite the rage here, and also just arrived; but though handsome and dressed from top to

toe in the exuberance of French fashion, I could never like or admire. She had the indefinable air of a second-rate actress. Her husband, too, did not look aristocratic, or anything bordering on it.

So after my late dinner I spent the evening in arrangements among Flora's wardrobe and my own, and close my book with anxious thoughts of to-morrow!

And to-morrow came: a fine, breezy, invigorating day, with merry birds and sunshine. The waters were sparkling as bright as if sin and sorrow had never been afloat on their bosom, and the blue and snow-capped aspect of Mount Wellington formed a delightful contrast with the low-wooded hills, which ran down into the bay. As I sat in the window after breakfast with a sort of nervous excitement which every moment filled my eyes with tears, busy tongues were in the street below me, gay children passing on to school, and most lovely rosy infants carried by in their nurses' arms, all seeming to rejoice in the brilliant morning. . . . I was busying myself with a letter I had begun the day before to James, a ship being on the point of sailing for England, where I concluded he now must be.

And while I wrote I heard some bustle below, soon followed by steps on the stairs; a moment after—Fenton flew in. *Was not this a crisis!* After being four days out at sea, the wind continuing contrary, they had brought to in some bay, and there spied the distant speck on the water, whose errand was so momentous to us both. Fenton was playing chess with some one called Gelebrand, when there was a cry of a boat following the ship. He started up, exclaiming that it was coming for him. A very brief space elapsed before himself and his baggage were in it, and on their way again to the Derwent.

After Fenton had been a few minutes in the house, Frankland entered with the greatest delight. He said he had heard the news from twenty people as he ran down street. After a little unconnected and very joyful conversation,—for still we all felt as in a dream,—Frankland pleaded my engagement, would not remit it, so we agreed to dine with them, and that Fenton should take me there in due time. He then left us.

I do not think any comparison can be fairly made between the love of a father and a mother for an *infant*. But he was evidently delighted with Flora. She could not be passed unnoticed by a stranger, and the dullest parent must have regarded with delight the lovely creature, just able to sit up and know it to be a *stranger* who embraced her. Visitors came in in rapid succession. . . . At length with Flora enveloped under the nurse's cloak, we proceeded to Mrs. F.'s drawing-room and spent a delightful evening; Fenton and Frankland were in such high spirits, and even the children seemed delighted to see him.

Next day was spent by Fenton chiefly in making arrangements about the ship he had quitted, which it appeared he had chartered for the purpose of investing his own funds and those of Mr. Prinsep left in the Isle of France, in a cargo of sugar, and it was now necessary that some indefinite thing (at least to my comprehension) termed a 'supercargo' must be sent in his place; which this thing was, a man, a sail or a bag of sugar, I was utterly ignorant of, the technicalities of business being altogether unknown to me. But this matter became intelligible when a person called Lord was shown me as the supercargo of the *Orelia*, and charged by me with many parcels and letters. This business being all disposed of, we were at liberty to return visits and make further arrangements.

I had so many visits to return that I came home quite worn with weariness, but not the less pleased and happy. There is something inspiring in the climate; perhaps a little too keen for me; those who have been here for any time like it. The style of the houses is English generally, save that verandahs to almost every house indicate the necessity of a shade for summer: there are a few brick and still fewer stone houses. The generality of those inhabited by the mercantile class are wood, or what is called brick loged, a compound of both. Gardens surround almost all, and these are now gay with hedges of scarlet geraniums, stocks, wallflowers, and an unknown variety of native shrubs. The tree which here seems most beautiful and most common is the mimosa, sweet-scented almost to excess; its odour resembles the white meadowsweet of our hay-fields, and its blossoms are a rich yellow—it is quite different from the sensitive mimosa of India: it is graceful alone, but still more beautiful in clumps.

23rd August.—Several days have passed unnoted, for I thought it needless to detail a list of visits or of visitors. I have been at one large party at Government House, which being the first, I shall say something more in detail, as I conclude one description will serve for all. These parties are given each Tuesday, and I was let into a secret by Frankland, that the Temple of Janus is not closed in Hobarton. He expressed his regret that I had been invited that week, ‘as now we shall never be together here,’ for there were divided parties—one colour assembled on one Tuesday, the other on the next, alternately, and the new arrivals *continued* in the one they made their *début* in. This information I received with regret, for such a companion as Frankland would be to the party, what salt is to the egg. However, as the lot was

cast, it was irreversible. Having enlightened me considerably on the nature of these conventions, he left me to conclude my toilet, for I was braiding my hair, attired in my dressing-gown, at a huge mirror in my sitting-room, when he came in, and he bestowed so much admiration on its length and quantity, he prayed permission to remain and see the work concluded, which I assented to on the condition he was to tell me 'stories' all the while.

At six o'clock we found some fifteen or twenty persons assembled in the Drawing-room at Government House, a few faces I had not seen before. The business wore a solemn aspect. . . . Captain Swanston was there, in figure and style not defective to fill up the detail of a dinner-party. Mr. Burnett also I saw, who is a very gentlemanly man of the old school; a Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton who had both been some years in India, and seemed very pleasing and well informed; next a Mrs. Sorvel, a nondescript kind of person, pretty, but a little fierce withal: she had not enough of any definite quality to call her either wise or simple; to me she seemed just part and parcel of her gown. She affected a becoming sort of wonderment at my 'astonishing courage' to undertake a 'voyage' alone. I was much amused. I assured her the days of Pamela-like adventures were fairly gone and away, and every one but very young girls, or very simple old ones, might travel, where they list as fearlessly

'As she whose beauty was far beyond
The bright gold ring and the sparkling wand.

How much more endurable is the fool of nature's fashion than the fool of affectation's creation.

It was a great relief to me that the stranger's privilege gave me a seat by Colonel Arthur during dinner. I saw

during the evening the port officer, who had been the first to commiserate my dilemma and to offer his aid, . . . the Padre, Mr. Belford, his wife and daughter, some medical and some military people—it was just what we would call in India a Station party. But alas! there was an indefinable something belonging to Indian society wanting, and like the unoccupied place of Brutus ‘in the vain triumph of the imperial lord’ of Rome, you thought less of what was than of that which *was not*. But all parties, whether gay or grave, terminate, and I made a faint plea to Mrs. Arthur of the necessity of an early return to my baby, and made my salaam.

As you will perceive, there was nothing to tell of this burra kaunna, though I have given it two pages. I thought I might find occasion hereafter to mention some of these names, and it might be as well to introduce them according to order.

I do not expect to write for some days, for, as we have decided on remaining for some time in Hobarton, I shall have much to attend to, particularly as the *Denmark Hill* will sail in a few days for Sydney, and I shall then lose my most careful and useful assistant, Mrs. Hughes, whose attention to Flora has been invaluable to me.

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II

SEPTEMBER 12TH, 1829—JULY 11TH, 1830

12th September.—*Macquarie Street*.—I am again set down in a habitation of my own, to tell you somewhat about the last three weeks—it is surely that since I wrote last.

Well, our first object was to remove into a private home, and then I began to miss my Indian attendants, who never suffer you to see any thing or *place* until fit for your reception—something very different I had now to experience. We selected a house—one of the last in Macquarie Street, which I liked as affording immediate access to the jungle. It stands a few doors higher up than the Franklands', which locality was one of my chief inducements. So into this empty house all our baggage was conveyed, according to the taste of two or three assigned men, who had no idea of doing anything beyond the letter of their instructions. They put it inside the house and departed. I went for one or two days and looked at it in despair, but finding that neither sirdar bearers nor the more disinterested fairies, whose assistance to the housekeepers of past time has lived both in story and in song, were coming to my aid, I collected all the moral resolution and *immoral* physical force I could command—which latter material you must translate as referring to our convict servants—and proceeded to my unwonted and un-

relished task. It was almost an Augean one—for though I had sent two servants every day for a week, who were supposed to be cleaning the house and furniture, it became very evident to my unpractised eye that their exertions had only extended to lighting fires to dress their dinners and keep them comfortable at their game of cards. Fenton, who has not the organ of arrangement, was of little assistance; besides, he was engaged with accounts and matters of business.

Perhaps I ought here to tell you that the labour of mechanics or free people of any description is enormously expensive—£20, £25, and £30 per annum are usual rates of wages for a nurse or free woman. I sent for one of those carpenters whose labour in India you may obtain for 4 annas, which is about 6d. English, to put up some nails and regulate some shelves. How astonished was I at his bill presented for £1, 10s. 6d.—and everything else is in this proportion. But I must pass over these details. . . .

After seeing my room matted and the beds curtained, my next solicitude was providing a nurse for Flora, as I had engaged the woman I brought from the Isle of France only for the voyage, and I could not reason myself into the endurance of a prisoner in that capacity; so I took a woman whose early education in the south of Ireland was completed in a *barrack* in Van Diemen's Land, with the further advantage of having, during ten years' residence, lived successively with every family (sufficiently independent to hire free people) in Hobarton, and very many in Launceston.

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I arose very early to-day, and with a succession of unrelatable employments, one of which was nailing down the mat on my bedroom, the servants having put it crooked, I am

'awearry, awearry,' therefore take advantage of Flora being abroad under Mrs. F.'s eyes to commune with you, and glean a few of my scattered ideas into the sheaf of this fair sheet. And *there* are the whole party at the gate, returned from their walk, and I have only time to say farewell and *hide* my book.

3rd October.—Verily, my dear, 'our book' at this rate will die a natural death: another unrecorded fortnight, and what is my apology to be? Certainly *not* forgetfulness, if such an apology could be cited, for I never thought of you more frequently. It must chiefly be, that there is a perpetual stir, a going out and coming in of visitors; also that I walk a great deal, for at this season the climate to me is perfect luxury.

The perpetual encroachment of the servants on my time is indescribable. After our breakfast at eight o'clock, I order dinner and go with the cook to the store-room, for anything requisite, for I need hardly remind you of the direful necessity of having to lock everything up yourself. Here my daily admonition is, 'Take all you want *now*, for I will not come here again.' Then perhaps the cook departs to the market for any small articles wanted; in an hour after, when perhaps I am nursing the baby or writing a letter, or arranging my clothes, a knock comes to the door: 'Please, mam, will you give me some rice, or some sugar or spice, or something else out of the storeroom?' It is in vain to remind the offender that I said I would not go there again. His or her 'Very well, mam,' will not supply the deficient article when dinner comes, and the only redress left me of 'sending him in,' will only give me another to pursue the self-same plan of annoyance, which is repeated in every family of the Colony. Well,

if I cannot set aside the evil of returning to the storeroom, I must lock all my trunks or drawers before I quit my room, and when I am again in the storeroom my expert attendant puts his hand into the case or cask behind me while I am opening some box or canister, and abstracts a bottle of wine or porter or brandy and coolly departs with his prize under *his* coat or *her* apron.

I may tell you here what my establishment consists of: a nurse, a cook, a laundress, a housemaid, a man who cuts wood and is groom; the boy I brought from India I have kept with the idea of training him for an inside servant; I cannot yet reconcile myself to the attendance of a convict, though I see them at every house in town, and admirable servants too. All *these* ideas I am told I shall lay aside and do as others do after a little experience. So this is my household at present. I asked the housemaid yesterday while I was giving her some work what she had been sent out to this Colony for: 'Please mam, for *housebreaking*'; a very pretty, neat, dark-eyed girl.

Of my neighbours in this street I see most of the Franklands and Hamiltons, and like them best. The Hamiltons are extremely kind, and altogether I need never be an hour alone, unless it is my choice (but I will decline all future invitations to large parties while I am nursing Flora). I see Mr. Betts almost every day; he comes in to dine whenever he feels disposed. He is very amiable and clever too. He has got a grant near 'Jericho'—only fancy a visit to Jericho!

You will perceive that altogether the tone of society here is very superior to what I had expected to find—indeed, I was fully prepared to be without any that I *could* mingle in.

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A ship from the Isle of France yesterday brought me a

regular packet of letters. Thank Heaven, my beloved James arrived safe in England after a short passage. All our immediate family were well, my father little changed, and Catherine not at all. My dearest brother! he tells me he is waiting with ardent impatience for my next letters, first for accounts of my health and safety, next for our opinion of 'his land of promise.' . . . He says Catherine is 'wild' to join us, but that such a step for her requires serious thought, as the Major's situation at home is very comfortable, and at his age it might be rash to commence a new life. But none of these scruples seem to influence Catherine, who says if *we* are absent she cannot exist in England, or divided from us—any privation she calls preferable. I have no doubt Catherine sincerely feels what she writes, but alas! all she knows of privation is the name. If they came here it must be with small means, and how a family accustomed to expensive habits could meet this change is a point of serious consideration. The advice they seek I am still incompetent to give, for I am yet ignorant how settlers live with only their land to depend on. Our own position is no guide, as we have a certain income to meet our expenses. Still it seems like want of heart to damp her spirit for the enterprise. I will use my best exertion to place a fair statement before James of the prospects for a settler here. He will be the fittest judge then of the application to their situation.

My beloved James concludes his letter with his lively hope and conviction that we shall all, in a brief space of time, be united in my home again

'Into one knot of happiness.'

If *this* is indeed to be, Oh! am I not overpaid for all I have suffered? The thought of such an event being realised makes

my eyes dim with emotion, for my very soul is knit to James.

He desires me to tell Fenton that he and my dear father have been at Castletown on a visit to his family. He calls Fenton's father a very handsome old gentleman, and says his younger sister Helen is one of the loveliest creatures he ever saw, and thinks it would be a very good arrangement if he would include her in the emigration from Ireland. Her family say she is very like Fenton at the same age, and I can easily realise the idea of her beauty by what I recollect of him.

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18th October.—Fenton has been gone for some days. The exceeding loveliness of the weather tempts me continually out, and I feel my health very much benefited by so doing. My neighbours here are, if possible, more kind since I have been alone. . . . Still, though I am very happy and very well, I should like to come to some definite plan about our future residence. . . . With the hope of our family or any part of it joining us, I should like a *home* where I might be making permanent improvements. Every one here tells me we are sure to find something of this sort after a little, so I am letting the matter take its own course, being in every way comfortable and happy, except in the idea that Fenton's long journeys back and forward are fatiguing and inconvenient.

26th October.—Fenton spent Saturday and Sunday here, and again departed to 'the bush,' as the jungle is termed here, much to my wonder that forests of high trees should be thus designated; though he is in excellent health and spirits he feels the separation from us very much. The dear baby is now seven months old, and so lovely and engaging. She knows him, too, and he complains of his evenings being so

solitary. The mere want of accommodation would not deter me from going with him, for in this fine climate

‘To follow thee to the forest green’

would be small privation, but we both fear to have the dear baby so remote from medical advice.

I was saying to him one evening that Mrs. Frankland’s likeness to some one I had known before was so striking, it haunted me, and that I wished to hear her name. ‘Oh,’ he replied, ‘Lady Colville told me it was Mason.’ ‘I have it all now,’ I said, ‘she must be sister to a lady who was governess to a family connected with ours in Ireland—and I well remember her telling me of her sister “Anne” going to India.’ How strange that I should thus meet the two sisters at such intervals of time! I am sure I must have spoken to you of Arabella Mason, for we were great allies. Her situation was rather peculiar. She had taken the charge of two boys whose mother was dead. Their father, a man of immense fortune, was anything but the kind of person whom it was pleasant for a young woman to be domesticated with. . . . My sister lived immediately beside them, and when she found how uncomfortable poor Miss M. was, she invited her to spend the evenings with us, which she did, and we all liked her. She had been very well educated, and was indisputably a ‘lady.’ Her society was a great advantage to me, for I was too much the mistress of my own actions, and she commenced reading French and Italian with me, which I had too much neglected. She often told me my ‘Sayings and Doings’ were a perfect curiosity to her, accustomed to the conventional regularities of London life, which I can now well understand. She invariably wound up all her exhortations by deploring that I had been allowed ‘to run wild.’ Nevertheless, many and

many a pleasant excursion had we over those beautiful glens and mountains, aided by a quiet pony we rode alternately, and escorted by Richard Webb, regarding whom many a sage admonition she bestowed on me—pity they were thrown away—and where is he, I wonder?

I lost no time in communicating my discovery to Mrs. Frankland, and at first it appeared to embarrass her, which made me repent having referred to it, but whatever the first impulse was that operated in her, it passed off, and we spoke of her sister and other members of her family I knew by name. And she after that told me something of the story of her life, and she had many trials.

6th November.—The climate now is to me perfectly enchanting. I am, as I told you, the last house in Macquarie Street, and the road passing it leads out to the Female Penitentiary, and interminable hills covered with forest. . . . The road to Newtown or to the Battery point is more in fashion for a walk; consequently my locality is seldom sought, except by persons going to select women servants, and I often disappoint my nurse, who, being a smart widow, likes to show her own smart dress and that of her baby at the band or in the street, and doleful are her looks when I turn myself to these dark deep woods, whose aspect is to me all beauty and novelty. It rarely happens that we ever meet a human creature, few walkers come out here, and there is no cultivation to require labour. But here I come, as often as I possibly can find a time. The birds, the trees, the wild flowers, the lovely weather, are all strange. Oh, how delightful it is to me thus to stroll at will

‘Away, away from the dwellings of men
To the skirts of gray forest o’erhung with wild vine
Where the kangaroos unhunted recline.’

Sometimes the woodman's axe wakes the silence, and when we rest on the grass for me to nurse the babe, I soon get my waiting-woman into good spirits by asking her some questions about 'Tipperara,' or of some of her bush adventures 'ten years ago.'

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 4th December.—A most oppressive hot wind by which I was a prisoner all day. . . . After such a day I cannot sleep. While I read I heard a violent entrance at the gate, and a yet more violent knock at the door, being undressed and attired only in my dressing-gown, and the servants all in bed at some distance. So I took the precaution to demand who stood without, and was replied to by Fenton, who had been riding since early day under this terrible sun and wind, having come the whole way of more than sixty miles without stopping to feed his horse, ridden through rivers and through bush, at all risks, and was here between one and two to tell the tale. I felt quite alarmed at the rashness of such an exploit—it might be very well for boys for a bet, but where there was no urgent motive it was certainly a hazardous experiment.

10th December.—As I had expected, Fenton has had a return of his old malady since his arrival; now, though he calls himself better, *I* cannot see that he is. One thing he is at least convinced of, the madness of such expeditions, and will attempt them no more. • He complains much of his head and side.

How time flies—in a few days it will be a year since we left Calcutta. I trust before the next return I shall be settled in some permanent home; though I have every comfort and much kindness where I *am*, still, for the sake of others, I feel we ought to be *progressing*. I am much averse to going to Launceston. But *here* there is nothing eligible to purchase

that would answer our views. Before the winter sets in I am resolved to bring the matter to an issue. Flora, too, has lost her colour and appetite, without any definite cause; watch as I will and have done, I fear her nurse, who is both ignorant and wilful, gives her when out of my sight such food as I do not permit.

23rd December.—We had a very delightful party at Secherone—Mr. Frankland's location at the Battery point—a picnic, dining in a tent. I was solicited by all parties to produce a curry as my part of the feast, which gave general satisfaction; Mrs. Stephen declared it to be the nicest dish she had ever tasted. I had Flora and her nurse along with me, who was as usual petted and admired. 'Our little Flora' is her general designation. . . .

7th February.—My dear friend, never did any of your dear letters reach me at a more critical moment than the last—of the 29th of August—yet it lay three days *unread*. I opened it and looked at the signature, but read it I could not;—you will not wonder, when I tell you that my baby, the very light of my eyes, was then quite despaired of, and given up by all but myself—even when there was no hope to any other, still I said, She will not die. She is now out of danger and renews her wonted smiles and endearments. But oh! what have I suffered! Sleep has altogether forsaken me, my strength too is wasted; though I force myself to eat and drink for her sake, it oppresses, not revives me.

I am writing incoherently I know, but it will be long before my nerves are renovated. I cannot go back all the separate days of misery I went through, for she was left to *die* by the medical man I had first brought in. And then Providence mercifully roused me to send for Dr. Bryan, who in

defiance of the other practitioner adopted a different mode of treatment.

Never, never can I forget the kindness of the dear Franklands, the hours they spent with me in that chamber of sorrow—indeed all were kind. One day when she was evidently better, a lady whom I had called to see with Mrs. Frankland before Flora's illness, called to visit me. I was in my room, but Fenton received her and told the cause of my not appearing. She requested so earnestly to see the child that he brought her into my room. My nerves were so shattered, to see a stranger was a pain, but soon the maternal kindness of her manner soothed me. She watched the baby and pointed out every trifling indication of returning health which my eye had not experience enough to detect, expressing her lively conviction the child would recover. I had then hardly *dared to hope*, and my exhausted spirit gave way under the revulsion of my feelings into floods of tears. I could not tell the cause, but she *knew* it—having been the mother of sixteen children—and wisely let nature take its course. On taking leave she asked me if I should like to see her on the morrow. I entreated her to come. . . . From that time Mrs. Darling often visited me, and we became very intimate.

After this time Mrs. Stephen told me that Dr. Bryan said to her that morning, 'Thank God, little Flora is out of danger—if she had died nothing could have saved her mother's life.'

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24th February.—With what unspeakable happiness I received a packet of English letters yesterday. . . . James tells me to rest assured nothing shall prevent him from joining us, and his eagerness to set out can ill brook the delay of being mixed in the plans of others. But he thinks it an insuperable

necessity to await what the Gibsons *can* or *will* do for a definite period, and *then*, if they still fluctuate, set out alone.

One passage in James's letter is so characteristic of his mind that I must repeat it; it is something in the shape of advice, established on the example of my sister's fondness for her children, interfering alike with her *duty* to them and their interest; he commences thus: 'It is painful for me to continue a passive observer of a system which must end in evil to all parties—need I impress on you the importance of pursuing a different line of conduct? But from your clear judgment and enlarged mind I look for other results. Your error would be without apology; woe to you doubly, if you descend into the weakly indulgent mother, and forget that the fair clay is committed to your charge to mould and spiritualise.'

There was so much for me to meditate on, I felt pleasure in the prospect of a decidedly wet day. . . . So after reading and re-reading my letter I have sat down, with my mind in a sort of chaos, to write to you, the rain still pouring.

As I wrote the last word, I saw an umbrella pass the window, but taking it for granted that it could only be some of the servants, wrote on until I saw Mr. Frankland standing by my side with his keen eyes riveted on 'my book' and the most lively expression of 'fun' in all his features. Really if I had been detected forging, I could not have felt more confounded, and looked from him to the luckless book without speaking—and then—he began: 'it was no use to deny it, he had long suspected I was an authoress,' and as for proof, he declared my maid Kitty had told their maid Mary 'that her mistress was writing a sight of books.' The more vehemently I asserted myself guiltless of the charge of authorship, the more

he persisted it *must be* so. 'Would I let him see what it was?'—'No.'—We could not come to any terms about it, and he went off laughing.

28th February.—We have been quite in a commercial ferment here, which matter will require explanation by relating the facts connected with it.

One of the Calcutta Prinseps was concerned in a house of agency there—Palmer's, I think. Well, Captain Swanston has just completed a purchase from Mr. Abbott of an estate somewhere near or beyond New Norfolk. He expected remittances from India to pay the amount, and his correspondent had lodged £7,000 in Palmer's house to be transmitted in treasury bills, but behold! the next day the house had stopped payment and his £7,000 went in the crash. I was in the street with the Franklands. She wanted to go into the store of that old shopkeeper, Kemp, to buy some Berlin chains he had for disposal, and while there, the arrival of a large mail from Calcutta was announced to be in circulation, and some rumour through the Captain of the ship of this failure. Swanston soon appeared, in great dismay, seeking intelligence in every quarter. I told him I was certain of having letters, and of the latest date, from our correspondents there, which by this time must have been left at our house, whither I immediately proceeded with him, though we were both too anxious to speak.

There I found a large packet of letters, and without hesitation opened Mr. Prinsep's, which contained a confirmation of this misfortune. Poor Swanston's exclamation 'This has ruined me!' went to my heart, though he is by no means a person of whose character I had a high opinion, believing that if self-interest came in the way he could set aside *every* other consideration—but there he was, a sufferer, and I deeply felt

for him. He proceeded to tell me he had involved himself in the purchase of Mr. Abbott's property, for which he was then quite unable to pay. I well knew Swanston was a keen observer, and never would make any bargain unless he would by it be a clear gainer. I therefore told him, If he felt embarrassed by his purchase, I felt almost certain Fenton would take it off his hands. He seemed quite relieved by my suggestion, and begged me to send off a messenger to Fenton. While this was arranging I went to look for Mr. Frankland, whom I had heard speak of this very place, and when I told him what I was about to do, he said if Fenton's object was to purchase he could find no better opportunity. . . . On our parting he said, 'Oh, do persuade Fenton to buy it, and settle on this side of the Island!' This was just what I *wished* to do, and I am now awaiting Fenton's return with considerable impatience.

Well, Fenton came off immediately on the receipt of my letter, and after making every inquiry necessary, he departed with Mr. Betts to take a survey of the place, and returned quite delighted, as also Betts, who examined the garden and plucked some fine peaches. There was a house building of a large size for the farming people and overseer. It was of brick, and though ill-designed, they thought might be improved so far as to enable me to reside in it until we had time and means to build a good one. This too was very fortunate, for I had listened to so many doleful tales of living on the first location 'under a tree' or in a bark hut, or some horror of that kind, that I was charmed to think I might have a *house* to cover me; and here I may tell you, that one of Fenton's next neighbours at Westbury, Mr. Ashburner, his wife and family, had *literally* to sleep under a bullock cart!!! at their outset. She is spoken of by all as a most accomplished

woman, a beautiful performer on the piano; it made my flesh creep when I heard of her having to sit up in bed *immediately after* her confinement to sew sacks to contain the wheat, which must otherwise have remained loose on the floor of her room. Poor thing, and she accustomed to all the luxuries of an Indian establishment where she was married! This little digression I have made, otherwise you could not understand why *having a house* should seem to me such a fortunate circumstance.

So Fenton is now engaged in right earnest, in making his final arrangements with Captain Swanston. . . . My friends here inquire if I have no fear of living 'in the bush'—they forget my natural temperament, besides I have been 'a traveller.'

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7th April.—Fenton has been at our Estate almost ever since I wrote last, only returning to celebrate our Flora's birthday; but the sooner these journeys cease it will be the better, for his health has never been so good since that dreadful day he rode such a distance in the hot wind. . . . His residence, too, in the jungle must be very comfortless, and I am satisfied he neglects himself, and does too much of personal effort. These considerations render my removal a thing of necessity, even were it not my choice. This is autumn, far advanced; next month, I am told, is winter.

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5th May.—And is this an anniversary of marriage? Eheu! What a bewildering dream of a few nights since this day recalls. I fancied myself yet unmarried and living in Ireland. There was an indistinct vision of some unhappiness relating to Campbell, a weight that *would* not lift itself off; months had passed and still he came not. And I roamed as of yore in

solitude and grief about the ruins of the old church and castle of Dungiven. Suddenly a large packet of letters from my brother James was presented by one of the soldiers of the 13th, one too that I recollected attending his death-bed! How vivid were the emotions with which I broke the seals, exclaiming, that James would now account for the long silence and absence of Campbell, but though the letter lay in my hand there was ever some agency that interposed to prevent me from comprehending its import, while the *personal* appearance of Campbell in the very dress he wore during those 'last days' at Dungiven rose before me with a clearness I cannot in my waking mind recall him. There was a ring in the letter, which I was striving to put on my finger. The pain of the pressure woke me to that strange and bewildering feel of 'it is a dream.' The response to my audible exclamation came strangely to my senses in the gentle hold Flora had of one finger in her hand as she slept. I raised myself with an indescribable terror of *what*, of who was *that child*. Nor was it till after I sat up in bed, and, by the lamp, looked steadily at her and at Fenton, both sound asleep, that I regained a conviction of my identity; but with renewed consciousness came also a faint and giddy sickness, which actually forced me to lie down and close my eyes. Floods of repressed tears at length enabled me to breathe, and I lay in sad and troubled rumination till daylight. *These* dreams are truly terrible, they seem to let loose all the long pent up waters of affliction on the soul. Indeed, for two days after, I could not regain the composure of my mind. Strange voices seemed about me, and visionary shapes passing before my eyes. Is not this what Byron means in those powerful lines:—

'Yet ever and anon of grief subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting'?

I can only close this day's diary with the hope that the 5th of next May may find me, if not wiser, at least more firm in mind.

20th May.—I know not how it is I cannot resist the impulse to write on every day marked by any event of past time. It was this day I left home on my way to Argyleshire—the first time I proceeded in the path of life alone with Campbell. . . . But this is all past and gone—gone, save those bitter memories from which I must endeavour to divide my thoughts as best I may.

I have nothing interesting to write of. The winter has now set in, and the streets nearly impassable with rain and mud.

2nd June.—Fenton has been here and is gone again. He thinks the finishing of our house will be sufficiently advanced in a month to admit of my residing in it. . . . I have been trying to gather from Mr. Hamilton some knowledge of the locality. . . . The township of New Norfolk I believe boasts of some half dozen inhabitants, the police magistrate, Mr. Dumaresque; the clergyman, Mr. Robinson; the district surgeon, Dr. Officer, of whom Mrs. Hamilton speaks very highly. A few miles nearer our abode, Mr. Oaks resides—a settler and a curious specimen too, a *ci-devant* Indian, and one who seems endowed with the talent of going *wrong* in all places and under all circumstances. He had a very good appointment at Madras, could not live on it, left India inextricably in debt, ditto England, and has wound up this well spent life with settling in the bush on a farm he rents. I have seen Mrs. Oaks often in Hobarton, a fine-looking young woman, and gay too, where I should be broken-hearted. I do not know enough of her to say if this is the resistance of a firm mind or the apathy of a feeble one. If I could know

her *singly* I think I should like it, but he seems a reckless being, graced by his acquaintances with the appellation of a good-hearted fellow.

9th July.— . . . I have been for the last month making gradual preparation for our removal; having to do so much *myself*, I knew it was only by following this plan I could accomplish it without great personal difficulty, as the servants cannot be trusted to do the smallest duty without superintendence.

We have sent off the principal part of our baggage and some servants, and we should have been on the road long ago, only that Fenton has been really very unwell. . . . We are waiting very patiently at a boarding-house, where Captain and Mrs. Boyd have also taken up their abode from utter disgust of housekeeping with convict servants. I confess I too am much disheartened at being obliged to take one of that class with me as nurse, who certainly does not appear, either in language or demeanour to be a low person—her own account of having married, while unconscious of her first husband being alive, is no *crime*, but there is something about her I cannot reconcile myself to, notwithstanding her very plausible account of herself. This ‘treasure’ calls herself Mrs. Loyd.

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Dr. Bryan has just left Fenton and calls him *better*, so that if the weather moderates, we purpose leaving town on Monday, the 12th I think it is. I do not expect to be able to write again until I am at home! Home, alas! that word is one of sorrowful import. Has it any local habitation on this side of time?

III

JULY 12TH—DEC. 18TH, 1830

12th August.—*Fenton Forest*.—After more than the interval of a month I resume my tale. No Arabian tale alas! but one of dull and downright reality, and I think before I tell you aught of my 'forest sanctuary,' it were well to let you hear how I got to it, as that was a consummation at one time very doubtful, so I must take you back to Hobarton. On the 12th [of July] the weather had cleared; a very bright morning, too bright to last, decided Fenton, and though he was extremely weak, we set off in our buggy with Flora on my knee, her nurse and a girl from the Orphan Asylum having gone the evening before, to wait our arrival at New Norfolk. I need not detail all promises to write and parting regrets. . . . The thing was to be done one way or other, and though I felt both ill and very nervous, from knowing my illness was only the commencement of a period of indefinite suffering, I knew too, that the effort must be made, and the sooner the better for all parties.

. . . We descended into what might be termed an ocean of forest, as far as the eye could reach. The Derwent was still on our right, and far between might be seen farm-houses with their naked fences closing in patches of cultivation; in some, the trees only felled, and the ground cultivated between the stumps, for it appears the process of taking them altogether

out of the ground is expensive, and therefore a progressive business. I must confess these habitations looked dreary and slovenly in the extreme,—no attempt at neatness, no tidy inclosure for office houses, no little gardens;—but piles of wood for burning, sheepskins, pigs, rude farming implements lay to the very threshold in unsightly mingling. At these specimens of agricultural taste my spirits fell an octave lower, and only revived when no trace of man's agency defaced the beautiful wilderness: the road was good, and the sun shone out brightly until within a short distance of New Norfolk, when light snow showers began to fall, and heavy clouds gathered on the hills.

On the whole we got over our twenty miles very well, but were right glad to arrive at the township and find good fires, and a neat apartment, at its single inn, kept by a portly old lady, a female Boniface, who showed us every attention, and had a most excellent dinner on the table. . . .

When I arose next day, and returned to the room where we had spent the evening, the scenery from the window was enchanting. The Derwent, broad and deep, lay below the house; on each side rose precipitous banks, rocks and foliage mingled; a lofty range of mountain, called the Dromedary, rose from the river, wooded to the very summit. A few straggling fences appeared at the foot of these mountains, with here and there a solitary farm-house. •

Our hostess, who it seemed had received rather a favourable impression of us, appeared, to usher in a most inviting breakfast, and seemed well disposed to converse with Fenton on 'country affairs'—predicting too a snow-storm, which made us doubly anxious to proceed on our way, lest delay might altogether arrest our progress. Fenton then went out to collect opinions as to the state of the road, and to call on

Dr. Officer, with whom he presently returned. Very much indeed was I prepossessed in his favour, alike by his cordial manner and his intelligent and handsome countenance conveying no slight resemblance to my brother George.

I acknowledged myself somewhat dispirited and almost feared myself inadequate to go through with what I had undertaken, as we were all so delicate at that time. He reasoned very forcibly against this opinion and said instead of desponding 'I ought to feel highly delighted with the possession of one of the most beautiful and best estates in the Colony, one capable of being made anything of—that my chief means of happiness in every place rested with myself, but such a place in a fine climate presented much to contribute to it, and he had no doubt that a corresponding improvement in health would result from the mode of life a residence in the country rendered expedient.'

He spoke with so much spirit and good sense that I listened to him with real pleasure.

The day seeming tolerably clear, we sent off the women in their bullock cart, calculating they would have good light to get home before us. To the nurse I gave the baby's night things, etc., etc. When *they* were gone, and *we were going*, Mrs. Bridger came up to me with an important face to caution me with respect to my nurse, whom she believed to be one of the worst women in the Colony—everything that was bad and depraved—she had gone away nearly drunk, and was quite drunk on her arrival the day before. This was pleasant intelligence to one with my anticipations, but I thanked her warmly for her caution.

We proceeded as far as a most terrific ledge of rocks overhanging the river, round which the road wound, midway

between the river and a perpendicular cliff, along whose edge and at whose summit huge masses of rock jutted out and seemed as if they must inevitably crush us at every onward step; even the motion of the carriage below seemed sufficient to impel them forward, and through their angles you saw the sky above at intervals: these threatening on the left and the abyss of the river many fathoms below constituted together a fearful position. On entering this pass Fenton pulled up the hood of the buggy and drove our spirited horse on at full speed, expecting I might not observe our situation. I *did* see it, but forbore to speak until fairly past. I could not then resist remonstrating on such a mode of driving over such awful roads. We had no more precipices, but the road, if road it might be called, was a succession of gulfs and mire, through which it required the utmost effort of our fine horse to drag us. Every step I believed an upset inevitable. I grasped the poor infant to save *her* from the bruises that I received on every side. My comb was broken and my head cut with one sudden jolt, and I perceived too late the personal danger that such a journey exposed me to.

If I might bear up until we reached the shelter of a house, was the extent of my wishes and expectations; as we stood to breathe the poor horse after toiling up a steep and slippery hill, a storm of blinding hail and snow swept down from the mountains in our faces, and Fenton had to get out and turn the carriage off the road where a clump of mimosas formed a shelter from the storm. He was drenched with rain and snow, and if my fears for myself were strong, you may judge what I dreaded at seeing him, who had just arisen from a bed of illness, in such a condition.

The baby too, cold and hungry, was fretting on my knee, and I shed bitter tears over her as the gloom of the evening

approached. After the storm was past we again proceeded, but very slowly, the horse seeming quite spent. After toiling up another weary hill the snow again came on, and again we stopped. I then in despair inquired if there was no human habitation within reach where we might pass the night. He told me he thought we must be near the residence of Frederick Bell whom I had met at the Hamiltons', if we could find the entrance, as each side of the road was fenced with fallen trees piled on each other. After some difficulty we reached a gate and entered a waste of wood without trace of either man or animal, and drove onward at hazard, for now it was so dark we could barely distinguish one object from another.

Judge of my distress at this juncture, with a sick infant on my knee and almost powerless with fear and cold myself. The distant bark of a dog was to me a sound whose blessedness I never shall forget, and then the report of a gun directed us where to drive, and we approached a dwelling. In the darkness the light of fires within was a joyful revelation.

Without any inquiry as to who were within, Fenton assisted me out and gave the child into the arms of a man, who informed him that Mr. Bell was just come back from Hobarton, and showed us into a small apartment where Mr. Bell sat drying himself before an immense fire. You may imagine his amazement when I staggered in, faint and blind with the sudden glare of light—a lady and an infant, at such an hour!

Most kind and cordial was our welcome—every effort of master and man to revive and refresh us was bestowed; a cup of nice soup brought for the baby, who seemed quite joyful at the sudden change from the darkness and storm without to the cheerful scene; so after the refreshment of warm water and dry clothes for Fenton, we joined Mr. Bell at his excellent

dinner, though a late one. When it was concluded and we heard and told the 'on dits' of the day, I had leisure to notice that Flora seemed flushed and her pulse rapid and unsteady. Mr. Bell summoned his man 'John' to procure me some water for a bath and told me he had a medicine chest, out of which I at once prepared the prescribed dose. . . .

It was then I recollected with dismay that I had not a single article to put on her, and she had always slept in flannel. *Here* was a difficulty beyond Mr. Bell's hospitality to remedy. The only linen article he could afford me was a *shirt* or a *sheet*, so selecting the former I divested myself of my only warm garment—my under petticoat—into which I put my *poor* Flora and gathered it round her throat somewhat in the fashion of a mantle. Over this was a muslin shirt confined round her waist with the band of my gown. Her papa's silk handkerchief bound her head, and in this guise she dropped asleep.

Where to lay her down was my next perplexity, for Mr. Bell's accommodation was strictly that of a bachelor. He had slept in his sea cot swung in the only bedchamber, which he most kindly offered for us, and a couch was prepared on the floor, which no doubt might have been very comfortable for one person, but for three was scanty quarters. Such as it was, I was very glad to see Fenton and Flora asleep thereon.

It was extremely cold and how to manage during the night without a fire or a lamp I could not divine. For myself, I was faint and shivering with cold, and nothing to put on but Mr. Bell's shirt, to which I added a sheet folded something as a shawl, and thus I laid me down on the hard edge of the cot, fearing to disturb those who each needed sleep so much. I did not care to cover myself with the blankets lest the baby should be disturbed, and for her to sleep after taking calomel

was of vital importance. My anxiety was too great for sleep, and I lay watching her as long as the candle burned. But long and dreary was that vigil. Towards morning she awoke very sick, but as it was utterly dark my only mode of keeping her quiet was walking to and fro through the apartment with her in my arms, until Fenton woke.

It was then the cold pale twilight of a winter morning, and I did not scruple to send him to rouse our friend 'John' to get a fire made and some tea, of which we all most thankfully partook. I was, in addition to loss of sleep and fatigue, struggling against the most overpowering sickness. The only thing I had to keep me up was, that after Flora was bathed and had got a sufficiency of warm nourishment, she appeared evidently relieved by the calomel which I rejoiced I had so timely administered.

It was one of those bright days which generally follow a snowstorm, warm and invigorating; but Mr. Bell strongly advised us to give up the idea of pursuing our journey on this side of the Derwent, as our buggy could never get through it. Fenton then took a survey of Mr. Bell's boat and said he would attempt the Indian mode of crossing, with the body of the vehicle in the boat, the wheels over the side. All who listened said it was impossible, but the thing was done, and the horse swam the river gallantly.

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I ought to tell you the object of this excursion was to gain a certain point where a boat would pass from the farm of a Mr. Barker to that of a Mr. Ballantine. Once at Mr. Ballantine's, we were nearly on our own property and could drive over the plains in an hour;—furthermore, I must tell you the said Mr. Barker was introduced to me while getting into the buggy at the inn at New Norfolk as a 'neighbour,' and I 'guess' my

acknowledgment of him was not very alluring—for, truth to tell, he looked mean and dirty, and I should have forgotten him only for the present arrangement.

On inquiring of Fenton who and what he was, he told me he was now a man of very large property, one of our squires! had been a shopkeeper, partner with another illustrious, Kemp, who still kept the concern in town, only *calling himself* an agent or merchant. They were among the very early settlers and had both feathered their nest in the 'good old times' when they sold a pound of tea for £1, 2s. 6d.

I had hoped when the river was safely passed my troubles were well over, but a new and very embarrassing dilemma presented itself; neither soothing nor force would induce our horse to go into the buggy (I mean into the shafts). They said it was fright at the uproar of crossing the water, but it was evident his resolution was taken, and whenever backed to the carriage he reared and plunged in a way that would have intimidated a more daring person than myself. It was then suggested that, if once on the road and out of sight of the water, he would get quiet and proceed, so Mr. Bell kindly sent two men to drag the buggy into the road about a mile *at least*, and bade us farewell, business requiring his return. He promised an early visit to Fenton Forest.

The day was delightful, and with renewed hope and energy I took Flora in my arms and followed the procession, Fenton leading the horse while I took a path through the trees that seemed drier.

I wish, my dear, I could honestly keep back one *fact*, which was, that I had been so very *absurd* as to set out on this expedition in black satin boots; but the truth must be told, otherwise you could not understand why it was that ever and

anon I sat down to ease the pain of my bruised feet, for the boots were in fragments with the rough ground I had to walk through. Then, finding the *mile* lengthened fearfully out, my strength quite failed. I put Flora, as the Indian women do, on my hips, on my back, tried to induce her to walk, all in vain. The thought of 'Hagar in the desert' came across me as I lay down under a mimosa which spread bower-like over the footpath, and some few tears of weariness and pain were shed in spite of all my striving against them: and then again I pursued my way, with the double toil of trying to amuse the child as well as carry.

The road attained, with some little difficulty the horse reluctantly was harnessed, but when he once got the rein he flew *on, on*, while I was breathless with horror, supposing some greater evil yet to come. We were on Macquarie plains and the way had hitherto been level, but steep hills were in view, which tenfold aggravated my horror. Fenton pointed out the site of Mr. Barker's house, but my sight was dim with fear and weariness. My expedition seemed like that of Leonora and the Spectre Horseman.

The road wound up a hill, whose inequalities and side motion were so dreadful that I implored Fenton to let me out, and not kill the infant if he would [kill] himself. I vowed in my terror never again to let him drive me and at last succeeded in getting out with the baby. It was close to Mr. Barker's house, and heedless of mire I got as far from the buggy as I could. Mr. B. was at that moment engaged in the pastoral duty of ploughing, but he approached and offered me his arm, and so we neared his house, which was a new and capacious stone building of handsome appearance. To enter was *not* so easy, for every species of filth you can imagine had been quietly deposited about the doors, and it was floating

with mud. Hesitating how to emerge into this Augean pool, and dreading being overthrown by contact with large pigs if I invaded their 'pleasure ground,' I decided the point by letting Fenton carry me into the hall. A handsome hall it might have been, but just then seemed doing the double duty of barn and scullery. I was introduced into the parlour, and after being told the lady of the mansion would instantly wait on me, the gentlemen went off to investigate the prospect of the boat and the river.

Oh, what a mournful impression I received of a country house as I sat there (a full hour, I am sure) and surveyed the apartment! It was without a carpet, and half the window panes without glass; a very dirty table in one corner on three legs, contained I suppose all the glass and delft of the establishment. It had that undefinable air of 'the worst inn's worst room.' I was evidently a curiosity *in some way*, as I found a scrutiny was carrying on by means of the door and windows. I was visited by a little girl in a torn frock and hairpapers in abundance, and by a fearful serving woman who rushed in with a blazing block of wood in a shovel to relight the fire, while I held my breath in awe.

At length I questioned the damozel if I could get a little milk or a little sago or, as your favourite begging girl used to say to you, 'A little bit of anything,' for food for the baby. She civilly replied that milk they never used; 'And what then do the children live on?' was my simple inquiry. 'Please, mum, fried meat and tea.' . . .

My rumination was dispelled by the entrance of the lady of the house, arrayed in a very beautiful French Levantine dress of a pale lilac; next appeared the nurse and baby, who was rejoicing in a French cambric robe and cap, beautifully worked with superb lace. I really pitied the poor woman

who wished me to suppose this her usual costume. I could not admire the baby's lace when I thought of the delicate child on my knee, cold and hungry.

You may 'suppose' the style of our converse, etc., etc., until Fenton and Mr. B. returned, announcing the boat ready on the opposite side; but I learned with dismay that to reach it, we must walk round a creek of at least a mile in circuit, which the existing state of my shoes made quite impossible. I was then offered dry stockings and shoes by the lady and departed, with the assistance of a woman, who bore the well-loved name of Mary Campbell, to carry Flora.

With the support of Mr. B.'s arm I advanced with more ease than I expected after the excitement of the morning (it was with some surprise I gathered from the style of my companion that he *had* been a man of education and mingled with that class in Dublin in his youth; see the evils that spring from neglect of exterior, and orderly habits), and notwithstanding the pain arising from the unwonted use of leather shoes, we reached the river bank, where the boat and Mr. Ballantine waited to convey me over.

A lady and a group of healthy neat children stood on the opposite bank, waiting our approach with evident impatience. I shall not soon forget the cordial and maternal air with which Mrs. B. took the baby and claimed her as her peculiar care while she welcomed me to what she called her *humble* home. Her language and whole bearing was that of a well-educated person, a Scotch gentlewoman.

The house had obviously been commenced on an extensive plan. . . . What was finished was kept as neat as hands could make it, and Mrs. Ballantine's own room, though crowded with little cots, was in *perfect order*. A good fire was there, and

immediately clean and comfortable night things were put to air for the baby. Every child was doing some thing for our convenience; as when Mrs. Ballantine saw me, and heard me tell what I had undergone for the last two days, she entreated me to remain for the night and accept such accommodation as they could afford. They were evidently all at ease; no striving to appear what they were not, and I saw that my remaining would be more a pleasure than a trouble, and consented. Fenton went 'over the plain' as it was termed.

The conversation during the evening convinced me I was right in supposing Mrs. Ballantine to have been well brought up. She spoke unreservedly of their past and present condition. Her father had been a merchant in Leith; they emigrated after her marriage (from some losses) at the same time Dr. and Mrs. Officer had come; they were fellow-passengers. Her father and mother had settled on the spit they are now living on. He had built so much of the house they live in when he was shot dead by a brother of my old friend, Mrs. Grant of Maldah, in a fit of derangement, as they sat in perfect good feeling together. Mrs. Robinson had just risen from the table after dinner and was at work in her flower garden before the door, when the report of a gun hurried her into the house to see her husband expire. Their father's death, whose affairs were unsettled and understood by none but himself, threw them into poverty as well as affliction; *much*, very *much* had they to struggle against, but latterly patient endurance had done its work and their circumstances were improving.

I could not refrain from making the proper application of this little story to my own circumstances and felt that I had much to be thankful for.

In the course of the next morning Fenton appeared, and being quite renovated by rest and quiet I took leave of my kind entertainers. They promised soon to come 'over the plain' to see how I got on.

The drive along those downs gave a splendid range of distant hills capped with snow. After proceeding about three miles, a fertile valley lay below on one side bounded by the Derwent, on the other by an amphitheatre of woody hills, one or two singularly abrupt and beautiful. At the foot of one of these sugar-loaf hills Fenton pointed out our cottage, the road to it lying through a forest which we presently entered. The sun had gone down and the cold wind whistled through the trees; the withered bark of the gum trees waved mournfully in the air; but dismal as the approach became, more dismal still was the scene presented in my forlorn habitation.

It was a long, shapeless, naked, brick cottage outside, but oh! within, there was confusion worse confounded. Every article of baggage that had been sent up, furniture, packing cases, had all been piled up, promiscuously, as they presented themselves. The vile servants we had sent out had profited by the opportunity to pillage everything they could abstract. All the farm servants had collected in the house, and the nurse—my right-hand woman, as I took her to be—had opened a keg of rum, for their refreshment; rum, tobacco, noise and dirt assailed every sense with horror and dismay.

My choice of accommodation was not difficult, for there was only one apartment with a *door*. . . . Turn where I would, comfort found I none. Oh! how I wished myself back in India after a comfortless dinner; by the time I got out some things for the child, weary of everything I

undressed and went to bed, and I must fairly confess, cried myself to sleep.

After breakfast on the following morning, Fenton went off to his farming operations; and I proceeded to take a survey of what could be done to render our abode habitable. I first went into the verandah, which was filled with relics of the mason—heaps of mortar, barrels of lime, hair, sheepskins, old rags, old shoes, and bones of mutton, for the kitchen occupied the end of the dwelling corresponding with my room. Oh! how long it must be before I can effect any arrangement here. I need not hope for it until the servants are separated from our dwelling.

One of our first deficiencies I felt was the want of milk. There were cows, but no one attended to them; it was supposed whatever milk they gave was drunk by those who listed. There was no dairy, of course. I discovered that there was a 'milkman,' and sent for him to desire the cows should be milked at regular hours, and the milk brought to me; this was declared impossible, as the cows were not separated from the calves who naturally considered they had the best right to the produce of their mothers. So I have commanded a search to be made in the neighbourhood for a cow ready to calve, that I may have her trained in the way she should go.

Bread have we none, nor any one to make it, except the cakes of unleavened bread they bake on the hearth. Alas for me! who have not the most distant idea of the science of making bread, which in the interim we must send fifteen miles for, as Flora must have what is good. I think I must ask Mrs. Ballantine to come over and give some counsel in these matters.

26th August.—Since I last wrote, there has been nothing

before my sight or about my ears but scouring, dusting, whitewashing, and general correcting of abuses; but alas! the hydra-headed monster creates faster than I can take away. However, the result has been the consolation of sitting down this morning to write in a clean apartment; finding carpets out of the question I have spread it with Kedgeree mats, which look very neat. I have got some shelves for my books, the windows cleaned and curtained; all the rubbish being removed from the verandah, and a few rose bushes planted to grow up the pillars, it is a pleasant sheltered walk for Flora. The garden is very beautiful and in excellent order. The situation of it is admirable at the junction of the Russels Falls with the Derwent. Our cottage is on a hill and the ground descends in beautiful natural terraces; the ground between the garden and house is as left by nature, a very lovely park-like region with some very large trees. Fenton has been at work, what they term grubbing these trees, which operation is both difficult and laborious, as they are to be removed 'root and branch.'

14th September.—What enchanting weather we have had the last month—just cold enough at night to render a fire pleasant. I have walked more this last fortnight than I did all the time I was in India. I begin to see how beautiful this place may be made when we have time and means to effect it.

I have sent off my thrice odious nurse—her profligacy was so appalling I would not let her remain under the roof even if I never get another. I have taught the girl 'Sarah' to bathe and dress Flora, who likes her, and this she performs in my presence night and morning.

I am comparatively comfortable, with a good, clean kitchen, a little dairy, abundance of milk and excellent butter—the latter prepared by *myself*. At *this* piece of information I see you open your eyes, but I wish I could give you a just idea of the self-satisfaction I felt when I first achieved this exploit. I sat down to write to Mrs. Hamilton that I had made five pounds of ‘beautiful butter.’ She wrote to me in reply that if I had been true Irish I would have called it *elegant butter*.

I am minute on these trifles, because I have been taught *here* that it is absolutely necessary that we should have felt the want of the common comforts and conveniences of life, before we can understand that these are blessings. Much did I need to have a juster view of the importance of the common *duties*, common comforts, and common enjoyments of life, for far and wide of the truth had my imagination led me. How true it is that a price has been fixed on every enjoyment! how soon we become indifferent to that which is procured without effort, and the duration of our pleasures greatly depends on the exercise of our physical or mental exertions to attain them. Here are many lessons for me. You will join me in the hope that they may not continue to fall like the ‘seed by the wayside.’ It is well to be permitted to see that we have been led, without our own purpose or knowledge, by a Hand that cannot err, into the very position of moral discipline our condition requires.

After some consultation we have come to the resolve to build another range of apartments behind what is already finished, of a larger size, for bedrooms, nursery, store-rooms, etc., and by taking away sundry partitions to throw the seven small rooms into four large ones: well-proportioned they can never be, from the original design being bad, but as *room* is our object, and an object, if possible, to be *combined* with

economy, this plan will effect both. The *reasons* as follows : in the first place, it will require a large expenditure in fencing, clearing, and building of office houses, to put this place in such a state of cultivation as will afford the prospect of future remuneration. Next, there must still be a considerable sum laid out in stock to procure a return in wool. Next, there are several small grants and farms contiguous to this property which if added to it would importantly increase its value. With these objects standing in the foreground it would be madness to attempt building until the place makes some return, and this certainly cannot be for the next two or three years. To obtain future ease we must submit to present privations, and our ultimate object will be importantly advanced by living as quietly and as much retired as it is possible. Happily there is no struggle with *inclination*, for there is not one individual in the neighbourhood I either *could* or *would* associate with—my accidental rencontre with Mrs. Ballantine I do not bring into the question of visiting, for she is a domestic quiet person, and I am well inclined to the interchange of all neighbourly civility with one who assumes nothing. She, I find, has many acquaintances, *whom* or *what* I know not. There is a clique in the vicinity of the River Plenty, all connected together and good friends after their own fashion. When Mrs. B. gave me a hint that I might be very sociable with the settlers at —, I profited by the opportunity of announcing that visiting with me was out of the question ; both Fenton's health and my own were unfit for it, and I had made a resolution never to leave the child ; besides the prospect of an increase to my family presented another impediment, in conjunction with the state of the roads.

A few days after this conversation I suited the action to the word, for while sitting on the step of my door, meditating over

a portfolio of letters, I saw through a vista of the forest a procession on horseback, green veils waving among the branches of the mimosa, and I fled. *Where?* Why, out of the back window of my bedroom, where none of the household could witness my retreat, and hid myself in a most exquisite sandy creek. There I rejoiced in my happy escape, examined the heaths, delighted in the gush of the rapid mountain river, making one or two adventures out of my lair to see what was astir in the world, and there were the domestics in various directions,

‘ Who sought her long in bower and shaw—
The lady wasna’ seen ;’

and when the coast was clear I emerged, and united in the woe for my absence, in the most pathetic manner. To Fenton I did not reveal my evil deed, for he would have favoured me with a small lecture on universal benevolence, etc., etc., which I was neither disposed to combat nor yet to profit by, which will prove to your *dissatisfaction* I am no whit amended.

And now, my dear, I must close my book and go and make a sago pudding, for I have no cook. He went along with the horrible nurse, and for the time being I brought in a young man off the farm, who had once been in a baker’s shop and had the strong recommendation of being clean.

It requires little skill to manage our cooking, for a curry or some soup is the only food I relish, and poor Fenton is so delicate in his appetite he scarcely eats at all, and what is the most distressing part of it, it is quite impossible to tell what does agree with him. He looked so wretchedly ill a few days since that I wrote to Dr. Officer to beg he would come, as it were, to see me. I imagined him apprehensive about himself and for that reason did not appear to remark anything unusual. Dr. Officer admitted that he was in bad health from derange-

ments of the digestive organs, but assured me of his firm conviction that he would renovate after he had been longer naturalised to the climate, but that he must leave off his starvation system and exert himself less in the approaching summer.

2nd December.—I often think of one of Madame de Genlis' Tales of the Castle where a fair lady is compelled to walk at one even pace over a smooth green plain on which the sun never ceases to shine or the lady to walk, and then compare my case with that of the spell-bound damozel of yore.

But soberly speaking, since the mimosas came in flower, I think every minute I am in the house time wasted. . . . Sometimes we go and sit where Fenton is directing the sawing up of trees, which when piled in huge heaps are set fire to, and the ground cleared of them without the labour of drawing off. I go from a double motive—to have an eye on Fenton and to intercede for the preservation of any fine tree—to the wonder of the by-standers, to whom all trees are the same. Flora laughs and plays and gathers flowers, and Fenton ever seems better when he sees her near him.

Then the banks of the rivers are so endless in rich variety of shrubs. I go miles along them with undiminished interest and never meet a human face. My love of flowers has not diminished, and I fill my flower bowls with native blossoms and English blossoms alternately. I am sure if the way I spend my day could be *seen* and *commented on* I should be reported insane; and what have I to urge in my own defence, save that I really am quite content and should be very happy if Fenton's health was better? I know I cannot continue this mode of life very long—circumstances must of necessity soon alter it, but as it is, I never know one hour of weariness.

Fenton has received a letter from a cousin of his who left the 13th when they went to India and married a Bath lady with a large fortune, stating his purpose of emigrating to this colony, induced by the favourable account of our experiment. He mentioned having seen my brother James at Castletown and reading many of my letters! (pleasant enough to have one's thoughtless and confidential letters criticised by those you never saw). However, the result of these conferences has been his resolution to join our party. He brings a large establishment and eight children, governess, etc. . . .

By the same ship I received a long letter from Fenton's father, who is very complimentary in saying the perusal of my letters to my own family has interested him so much that he feels he has experienced a great loss in not having sooner sought a correspondence with me. . . . He is charmed with my account of a 'bush' life, our fine climate, and independence of all conventional restraint. I am to tell him all about the trees and indigenous productions of the island, and he is henceforward and for ever to discard his son as a correspondent. I well recollect in one of these letters he alludes to, in the fulness of my heart calling on James to rejoice that Flora was able 'to dip her fingers in the cream bowls.' He 'hopes there is no danger of Flora falling into the milk pan.'

So now I may look forward to a little community around us, for all parties have made up their mind, Where we are there will they also be. I wonder what influence on my happiness these events will have, for I admit I am deeply impressed with the belief that relations by marriage never are and never will live happily together, at least with respect to a wife; and without knowing one thing relating to my husband's family, either for or against them, I felt much satisfaction when I

married Fenton in believing we should never come in contact. If they do not interfere with me, as *they seek us* I shall do all I can to keep on amicable terms, but if they *do* I shall take up the defensive by keeping apart.

Captain Thomas Fenton supposes a year must elapse before he can perfect his plans and financial arrangements. This will barely give us time to complete the additions and alterations we have begun. And then will end the pleasant and independent day of *thinking* and *doing* according to my own taste with none to blame, none to praise. *N'importe*. I suppose it must have died in some way. Still I like its tranquillity well.

'Serene not savage was the solitude
Of those unsighing people of the wood.'

18th December.—I have been witnessing the novel proceeding of sheep-shearing—some of our wool is very fine. Fenton was fortunate in purchasing a flock of sheep on his arrival on very low terms, which he put on his grant at Westbury.

Next comes the wheat harvest; the fields are bending with luxuriant crops; how like England when I walk in the twilight!

I must tell you a dreadful fright I got with Fenton last week. A messenger from town came up to say a ship from India had come in, and all manner of creatures, horses, deer, etc., sent by Prinsep to be landed as he should direct. Seeing it was immediately necessary for some one to go and direct their disposal, he prepared to set off, though he had been complaining all the morning of extreme giddiness in his head, but *go he would*. It was Tuesday, and our post days are Thursday and Sunday; he said he would certainly return

next day, but if anything prevented him from leaving town I should have a letter by Thursday's post. With much uneasiness I saw him go, particularly as he rode a spirited Arabian, and he would only wait to take a mutton chop with Flora.

After he disappeared among the trees I sat gazing with many troubled thoughts, wondering if there was any *road* out of the bush. . . . So I summoned Sarah with the child, and calling for the boy I had brought from India told him to show me the way to the road to Hobarton. . . . We ascended the plains and descended into a valley where a rapid mountain river rushed; over this was thrown a very rustic bridge, and my escort announced 'this was the Styx bridge and the high road to town.' Seeing a beaten track was some comfort, for I feared that Fenton might have the trackless bush to traverse.

It was a very long walk, the boy and girl took Flora alternately. We sat down to rest on the grass, and I was delighted with the novel aspect of the forest about me. . . . I lingered until the shadows became so slanting I knew sunset must be near. . . . On reaching the top of the plain the boy directed my attention to some smoke about three miles behind our house, which he told me was from the fires of the natives. Seeing me look rather dismayed, he said 'he had heard that tribe never did any harm, as Mr. Abbott had been very kind to them, and in harvest used to induce them to come and carry in wheat and thresh it *in our parlour*, for which he gave them knives and blankets.' This comforted me a little as to our personal safety, and being extremely tired, and my mind amused by my long expedition, I soon went to bed and slept well.

Next evening arrived without bringing Fenton, and *this* did not give me any uneasiness, as I felt it would be impossible

for him to finish his business in town in the time he had allotted.

But next day when the post arrived and *no letter*, I felt much disturbed; my only hope was that he had not written *because* he was coming. So I waited dinner until dark, and gave up all hope for that day. Next morning the overseer came to me complaining of the delinquency of some of the men; they were abroad at night, and it could not be for any lawful purpose. The horses, too, he was satisfied, had been ridden violently. I was ready to weep with agitation and perplexity. The overseer seemed respectable, and, quite ignorant of the best plan to pursue, I told him I was hourly expecting Fenton's arrival, and all he could do in the interim was to be vigilant. I felt too uneasy to go out, knowing there were several desperately bad men on the farm, who, if aware of Fenton's continued absence, would stop at nothing, the untrodden bush behind us presenting an impenetrable retreat for absconders.

I really felt my heart sink when the next evening closed and no tidings of Fenton. . . . I struggled to conceal my uneasiness at his unaccountable absence while the servants were about me, but when evening came and a gorgeous full moon rose opposite to the verandah, I walked there and shed tears, in more abundance for their being restrained. . . . My nerves were so excited that the throbbing of the pulses of my head seemed the distant tread of a horse, and the footstep of the cat in the verandah made me tremble. Saturday morning came and Saturday evening closed without any alteration, except that then I did not *expect* Fenton, and the conclusion I came to was that he had never reached Hobarton. I was faint from agitation and loss of rest and food, feeling as if a decree had gone out against rest or peace on earth ever being permitted

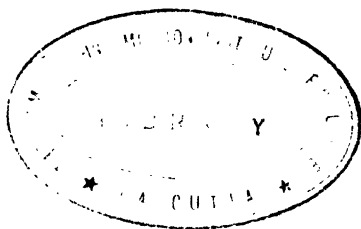
me. With renewed agitation I waited the arrival of the post, which brought no letter, no tidings of Fenton from any one, and then I determined on sending off a messenger to Mr. Hamilton. After summoning the person about the farm I thought best of, I only told him I had a letter which must be conveyed with speed to town, and entreated Mr. Hamilton to send the messenger back next day without fail. So I nerved myself as well as I could to wait his return.

As I lay on the couch in the nursery, quite spent in strength and spirit, a sudden joyful exclamation of Flora in the outside room brought me to the door, and I saw Fenton at the hall door, looking more dead than alive. My apprehensions were not unfounded. On leaving this in the heat of the sun he had only gone about seven miles when he fainted, fortunately near Mrs. Oaks' house. He had just power to get off his horse: he was taken in and every attention shown him, and when sufficiently recovered to proceed, Mr. Oaks rode into the settlement with him and left him in the care of Dr. Officer for that night. He went on next day, finished his business, and on Thursday he was on horseback in the street, talking to Dr. Bryan, when something started his horse, who plunged and threw him, his head being previously giddy. On this Dr. B. insisted on his remaining all the day quietly in bed, and would not let him leave town till Saturday, nor would he let Mrs. Hamilton write to say he was ill lest it should alarm me. This was well *meant*, but very ill-judged. Thank God, however, that the consequences were not worse; but you may judge the uneasiness I feel about Fenton—in fact, if I lose sight of him, I am uneasy until I know he is safe. And truly, I have not been myself since. I tremble at the step of every one who enters the house.

Dr. Officer came next day, and cautioned me about Fenton's

mode of living. . . . All his injunctions I have promised to follow to the letter.

Would to Heaven my confinement were well over, and my capability to exert myself renewed. Alas, I feel daily the need of help. My unwearied friend Mrs. Hamilton is trying to get me a respectable nursetender; there being only one person in town of known respectability, she has had some trouble in inducing her to come so far into the 'bush.' Mrs. Dumaesque gives her an excellent character.



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